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INWARD LIGHT  
H·FIELDING HALL

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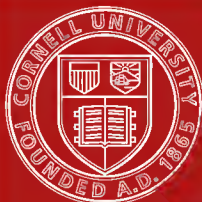
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# THE INWARD LIGHT



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THE  
INWARD LIGHT

BY

H. FIELDING HALL

AUTHOR OF 'THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE,' ETC.

'What is Self?'

'It is the Man-Soul made of Understanding between the Breaths;  
the Inward Light within the Heart. He becometh an Understanding  
Dream and fareth beyond this World.'

New York

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1908

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## PREFACE

THE words which form the title of this book, the quotation on the title-page, and the fuller quotation in Chapter XXI. are to be found in *Some Sayings from the Upanishads*, translated by Dr. L. D. Barnett.



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# THE INWARD LIGHT



# THE INWARD LIGHT

## CHAPTER I

### THE SECRET OF THE EAST

WHAT is that great and vital principle that underlies all Eastern faiths? What is that truth that finds so varied and so different an expression in Hinduism, Shintoism, Buddhism, and many another religion, in the philosophies of Laotze and Confucius? What is the understanding of the world that is acceptable alike to prince and peasant, to philosopher and labourer, to soldier and recluse; that is the basis of all truth? The West has sought it always. It has recognised that from the East came light, that in the East there rose a fountain of the spirit that dried up never. The West has sought, but has not found.

It has never looked deep enough. It has mistaken things, taking the non-essential for the essential, the form for that which it encloses, the temporary for the eternal. It has borrowed and then has found that what it took away was but a dead thing and that the life was left behind.

The East has ever been and is religious, not in part of its life but in the whole of it. It has held that religion is not of one day but of all time, not of time only but of eternity, not of eternity only but of every moment. To its mind religion embraces everything,

not man's soul only but his body, all of him; and not man alone but the whole universe; not some virtue but all virtues, all that is good and all that is evil. It is not therefore a theory, a teaching, a method, nor an ideal, a dogma, a thought; for these, however great, however true, must always be narrow, cannot hold but a little part of truth. They are finite, whereas religion is infinite. It is none of these. Religion is a way of looking at life and at the universe, it is a way to see and understand.

But to the West it is not so, and when it has gone to the East and asked for truth, it meant by truth a moral, or a virtue, or an ideal, or a dogma. It has sought the clothes in which truth shows itself and not the truth. Therefore despite all the books written of Eastern forms of faith none have been understood. The writers have explained nothing because they saw nothing, felt nothing, knew nothing. More especially is this true of Buddhism, that latest expression of an all-world view.

When I have read the Western books on Buddhism, when I have heard Western people talk about it and explain this faith, it has always seemed as if they were as travellers who describe a landscape dimly seen through fog and mist. To these wayfarers nothing is clear, there are no outlines. The mist wreaths open now and then and show long vistas — leading sometimes nowhere, sometimes ending in a cliff or chasm. At times they see the bases of the hills that have no summits, they are mist-hidden; or they catch momentary glimpses of far mountain peaks that hang all unsubstantial in the heavens. The mists move to and fro full of suggestions of unseen, undreamt of



things, of ghosts and spirits wandering homeless in the void. Nothing is fixed, or real, there is no sunshine; all is unhappy, sad, and formless. You are afraid of it, you would not care to go forward and affront what it may hold. For there is no clear light to show what is before, nothing but lightning gleams and meteors shot across the clouds, and a cold phosphorescence in the atmosphere that comes and goes. No one could see by that. It is a phantom land, a place of visions, like to the Western faiths. But to the Eastern it is otherwise. To him life seen through his religion is a landscape under clearest sunshine, gay and happy. His seas are all alive with waves and sparkle, and the purple hills stand up beneath a clear blue sky. Where there are rifts, morasses, dangers for the traveller in this land, the light displays them. He can see and stop in time and find another way. He sees not very far ahead, the horizons bar him as they must every mortal eye. He does not seem to see so far as those who look through mists and shadows that give delusion of great distance, yet he sees farther, and what he sees is clear. He does not take a shifting cloud for solid certainty, or rainbow shadows in the heavens for gates of paradise. He knows his view has bounds. This does not trouble him. He knows he cannot see the far sides of the hills, the bases of the world, infinity of space. He knows his brain and eye are limited. But he sees far enough for daily use. He sees the path before him, the turns and angles, the diversions of the ways. He knows whither he would go. The horizon is not walled with shadow, there are no wraiths nor ghosts that live there, no fear that has its kingdom there beyond.

And he is sure that the line that bounds his sight is not the limit of the world, of light and life. Beyond it there are other countries not less fair, where the sun is not less bright. He is not afraid to journey on, and he is sure that he will be always able to see enough to guide his steps. Distance will stretch to an infinity, there is a future soft with pearly lustre in a world beyond his ken.

That is the way he sees it.

For Buddhism is a very simple faith. It is not made of dreams nor revelations, nor founded upon the supernatural. It is the science of the evolution of the soul within the body. It is what men have seen and feel and know. It has ideals, beautiful ideals. They are not sunset clouds hung far in space remote from us: their base is on the earth, the spires ascend from the strong and sure foundations of the things that *are*. It has a theory of this world that agrees with all that science has discovered. It has a promise of Immortality, the only beautiful and reasonable Immortality the world has known. It is a study of man, not as he impossibly 'ought' to be but as he is, and of what he may be judged from what he has been. It recognises the soul because it sees it, and it knows it comes from some great Power because it feels that this is so. There is no cast-iron dogma. Whatever statements or deductions it makes are liable to correction if wrong. Never does it consider it has found the absolute. Its thoughts and its ideas are but a step. It seeks always new truths to add, new steps to climb towards an infinite.

The reasons of the errors of Western writers explaining Buddhism arise, I think, mainly from two causes. The first is this: it is assumed that the only part of

Buddhism which they know — the written teachings of Buddha and his followers — forms a system offered as being complete in itself; that it embraces all truth, all that a man need know and follow. It rests on nothing, rose from nothing, has no base, but drifts indefinite in space. They begin with the life of Buddha, they take his message and they end with the additions made by the disciples. Nothing is said of what the world was when Buddha was born into it, of the truths that then were widely known and followed. It is assumed Buddha ignored them. He only found them insufficient. It is assumed he made new discoveries of new truths, but he only pushed the old a further step. What he taught was the complement of all that went before.

The teachings of the Buddha are no complete scheme of conduct, of faith, of immortality. They rest on Hinduism — not the corrupt Hinduism of to-day with its caste and ceremonies but the Hinduism of twenty-five centuries ago. For Buddha did not come to destroy but to build, not to deny but to affirm. The world he lived in was one that in all the earlier virtues was as advanced as any is to-day. It was brave, and free, and learned. It was a happy world, of family love, of patriotism and honesty. Yet it was a world that made its only happiness in the current hour, that had a righteousness only of this world; which knew of nothing beyond. It drifted towards the grave and passed, fearful, into the unknown.

With the happiness of the day, with the righteousness that was necessary and true for this world the Buddha had no quarrel. He saw it and experienced it, and he knew that it was good and true.

But he knew, too, that it soon passed. Life is but short, its pleasures are but evanescent, we are drifted down the great river to the sea of death, and in that sea the righteousness of this world saveth not. That is what he said. And his message was of another life, of another righteousness, another happiness beyond the grave. He did not come to denounce this world or to rob it of happiness, but to add another world, to add a higher, more enduring happiness to that which passes so quickly from us. He came not to displace one truth with another, but to perfect truth with truth, joy with joy; to round our fleeting time with an eternity. And therefore Buddhism is nothing by itself. It is not, it never pretended to be a complete truth, to be a temple in itself. It was but another story added to that great building whose feet are in the earth, whose summit rises up towards heaven.

Therefore to understand the theory and practice of the Buddha it is necessary to know on what they stood and stand. If you would understand the pinnacle you must know also of the base. You cannot have one without the other. The higher the spire rises towards heaven the broader and deeper must be its base upon this earth. That is what makes it firm and strong, what makes it real. They are only unrealities and dreams that float unsupported.

If to the West Buddhism as it has been explained has seemed entirely vague and unsubstantial, theory and mystification, this is one reason, because its base was never perceived and understood.

When I wrote *The Soul of a People* I included in that 'soul' not only the Buddhism of the people but their other beliefs as well. I was sure then that these

were as essential as the Buddhist teachings: that they were even essential to the Buddhist teaching which could not stand without them. Yet at that time I did not clearly see that they were one whole. I did not understand how they completed one the other; sometimes these even seemed in contradiction. I thought that the creed said one thing and the people believed another. But I know now that this is never so. All the beliefs of a people — any people — are a whole. They are not a patchwork, not a medley taken here and there. There is in every man and every people allowed to develop naturally an instinctive consciousness of Truth, and everything in which they really believe is an expression of it. Their traditions, their legends, their moralities, their faith and creeds, are all but ways of setting forth this truth, this view of life. Whatever they believe they do so because it rings to them true. It has truth therein, hidden in imagery and phrase but still felt by them. Therefore they believe.

✧ But what this truth which underlay all their beliefs might be I did not know, I could not guess. I was unable to get behind the words, because the words seemed clear and definite. Yet words are but a vehicle to express something that is inexpressible, they are the body in which the truth is able to manifest itself. The words are never the truth, any more than the body is the life of man. You may dissect the creed, the legend, tradition, custom, formula as much as you like and you will understand no more of the truth it is meant to express than by dissecting a dead body will you find the life. The essential thing to know about any belief is not the form that belief is expressed in, not the words that actually are said;

you want to know what the teller wanted to say, what the hearer heard.

X Words are but images as stone or wood are. The savage roughly hews a god of stone to express a fear, a hope, a force, an emotion. To him and to those like him the image does express, does incarnate it. When he sees it he feels that fear or hope; the image is alive. To the stranger it expresses nothing, it is dead. He may analyse the material and the workmanship for ever and he will find nothing. It is exactly the same with any form of words in which a belief is contained. To the believer it is alive, to the non-believer dead. Because like beauty which is the beholder's echo to the beauty that is without, the spirit of the image, of the legend, of the creed is not really in the thing itself but in him who sees or hears and feels. Therefore to understand what is meant you must attune yourself to feel as do those who believe in these things. When you have done that all else is easy. You understand, you feel, and doing this you can form for yourself other images, other phrases, other explanations more in accord with your own mode of expression whereby to show these beliefs to yourself and those who think as you do.

That is my first point, that Buddhism cannot be taken as a part but as a whole. We must never divorce it from its base. And although the Burmese were not Hindus before they became Buddhists they had in their beliefs and traditions all the essentials of early Hinduism, and these survive to-day. Did they disappear Buddhism would topple into ruin. You cannot have a pinnacle without a base. That is the point essential for trying to realise what Buddhism really is.

But again — this faith of daily life must rest on something. There must be some conception of this world, of man, of his relation to the universe, on which this earlier faith must rest. And what is that? It is usually assumed it is what ours is. What do we think of the earth and all the world without us? That it is not connected with us in any way. We stand apart, a separate creation. That is our theology, the theory of our souls, though our science tells us differently, as far as our bodies are concerned. What do we think of birth? That our soul was then made anew from nothing. What of life? That between the cradle and the grave our destiny for all eternity is decided. What of death? That our soul then goes to judgment, or to await judgment. Our personality remains unchanged for ever, and the endless cycles of eternity are spent either in hell or heaven.

These are our fundamental thoughts, they are our axioms now. Perhaps they were not always so and we have only arrived at them by clinging to the letter which kills, because we have not the spirit which lives. But anyhow these are our beliefs and we think that all the world must hold them, not perhaps exactly as we do, details may vary, but certainly in essentials. In fact it never occurs to us that there can be any other conception, so we use these axioms to work out and explain Eastern beliefs. And what do we make thereby? To take an illustration: the East believes in the transmigration of the soul. We think this means that the unchanged, unchangeable entity of the soul of man is incarnated now in a beast, now in one man, now in another, as a lighted candle might glow moved through a series of lamps. We cannot

understand such an idea, for it seems to us absurd. Indeed it is so, but the absurdity is not in what the East believes, but the way the West understands it. Transmigration means a very different thing from this, because the soul is not to them what it is to us.

Then take Nirvana.

This is the Buddhist heaven, and we explain it that after centuries of effort in this world, in many different incarnations the weary soul acquiring sufficient righteousness is absorbed into the infinite. It loses its identity. 'The dewdrop falls into the shining sea.'

It seems to us only another way of expressing annihilation and death. It has no attraction but fills us rather with fear and distrust. Because we misunderstand its meaning; we read it in terms of our own premises.

But when you have abandoned these ideas, when you have learnt what to Eastern eyes the soul of man is now, and may be, you are then enabled to understand the strength and beauty of the conception, surely the most wonderful the world has known. Then alone can you understand them when they say that this Nirvana of which they speak is not annihilation, it is not death.

It is the opposite of all these things. It is the realisation of self in a greater, grander self than ever we have dreamed of; it means a fuller, more glorious life than this world gives us now. That is what Nirvana means to those who understand it rightly.

It is to explain and illustrate really what Buddhism is that I have written this book. It may be objected that in doing so I go to some extent over the same ground as in my former book, but it is not so. In my former book I wrote: 'My object is not to explain



what the Buddha taught but what the people believe.' My object now is different. I want to explain as clearly as may be that conception of the world, man's life, the past, the present and the future which finds its latest, not its last, expression in Buddhism. I use the Burmese as my illustrations because they alone of modern people retain the spirit of Buddhism as it was understood. They are a simple people and very often they do not see very clearly all that their faith means, and even when they understand they are not strong enough to follow. They are my illustrations as much by their failures as successes; for when they have succeeded it is because they have understood and been able to follow their faith, and when they have failed it is because they could do neither. If it be objected that we of the West are far wiser, stronger, cleverer in a thousand ways than this little people in their eastern valley and can have nothing to learn from them, I make this answer: It is true we are stronger, far, we are more civilised, far, we have many qualities, many virtues they have not. We have very much to teach them. We have in fact cultivated a side of Buddhism they have neglected.

But, after all, life contains more things than these, great as they are — than strength, organisation, civilisation, energy, and learning. There is happiness. Is that worth nothing? There is a serenity of courage in all the troubles of life. Is not that something? There is a conception of the world which rings always true. And at the end, to be able to see in Death, not fear, not horror, not the end of things, to find him not the King of Terrors but the Great Romance, is that for nothing?

To have a religion that makes for happiness and hope, never for fear, that is based on truth we see, that has its future high above, is it not worth considering how it may be achieved? We who are always saying that we are decadent, that life is not worth living, that faith is dead?

One word as to the form of this book.

Every one who writes or speaks does so in that way in which he thinks he can best express what he has to say.

This is my way.

Whether the man here spoken of really existed or not, whether each scene occurred exactly as described or not, what does it matter? This is not the history of a man, but of a discovery: it is the explanation of a vision of the world from its foundation upwards. But the history of the way one man saw, or might see it is the simplest way to make it plain to others.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOLDEN HOURS

It was deep noon. Right overhead the sun hung in a sky of blue so pure, so strong as almost to seem dark, and his golden light flooded the world. It fell in a tide of life upon the fields filling them with glory, it touched with fire the tops of the pagodas, — it made a magnificence even on the bare hillsides. Beneath the trees the shadows were as clear as crystal water, as full of lustre and of life.

There was a silence and a peace. The ploughmen who had worked from early dawn now slept beneath the palms, the cattle all were hidden, nothing moved. Even the crickets in the trees were still.

A man came riding down a lane that led across the uplands to the river. His European dress showed like a blot upon the landscape. The sun beat on him as on an enemy. He seemed a swimmer fighting against a flood that knew him not, this son of the misty North. The pulses throbbed in his ear-drums and his eyes were clouded.

Of a sudden the pony gave a start, a swerve, for he had nearly trodden on a snake, and the rider lost his balance. The pony was frightened, and a moment later the man had fallen and was alone.

The sun beat on him pitilessly, he must find shelter from its cruelty. So he crawled on, dragging a broken

leg, and came at length to the shadow of a palm grove near at hand. There was a well there, fresh with the coolness of the water spilt about it and the greenness of moss and fern. With a last effort he reached the curb and then his senses failed. The world became dark and void. A squirrel came and looked at him and fled, and a chameleon hid behind a tree.

When he again regained his consciousness he found himself within a little wooden chamber in a monastery. His leg was set and bandaged with rude efficient village surgery. Upon his head were leaves damp with fresh water. The night had fallen and a breeze sweet with the scent of flowers blew in from opened jalousies. He felt a peace come on him and he fell asleep.

But in the village there was trouble. The villagers were gathered under the big tree beside the gate and grumbled. They did not want a stranger in their village, a foreigner, one of those strong and restless men who went about and pushed every one and everything aside. They were a quiet people and they loved their distance from the strife and noise of money-making. They were a timid people and they feared intruders. Why should this white man stay within their monastery, let him go to his own kind. It was not so very far down to the river station where the steamer came each day. They would take him there by cart, now in the dark and coolness of the night; they would put him on board a steamer, and be rid of him. So they determined. They yoked the oxen and they went up to the monastery. The monks were at their prayers, the children chanted, the night was full of prayer sung by their earnest voices. The villagers sat and waited.

When the prayer was finished the old monk came forth and standing on the steps between the carved balustrades under the stars he asked them what they wanted. They told him, 'Bring out the foreigner. He cannot stay. We will send him to his own people.'

The monk shook his head. 'He cannot go. He is too ill.'

'It is not far,' they urged; 'three hours in the cart will take us to the river, there we will put him in a steamer and send him to the city where the white government is. We will give him to his own people.'

'He will die if he be moved. He has fever.'

'He will die if he stay. If die he must, let it be amongst his own, and our hands will be clean.'

The monk refused.

'Consider,' said the headman, 'how can he stay? Who is he? no one knows him here. He has dropped upon us as it were from the clouds. It is not good to have anything to do with these strange foreigners if you can help it. He had no one with him, no horse, nothing. He is some wanderer it were as well to be suspicious of. A deserting soldier, a sailor who has run away, as we had before. If he stay he must be fed, must be looked after. If he die he must be buried. It is not our business to do either except for our own folk. Let us take him at once now when the night is cool, that the way may be easier.'

But the monk would not.

'Charity,' he answered; 'did harm ever come to any one from charity? Let him be. When he is better we will see. And for the rest, what will he want? — a little rice, a little fruit, a little water. Have you not charity to that amount?'

They murmured they were afraid. A wolf within a sheepfold, that is what they thought him, and wolves are wolves even if sick. They were not unkind, they did not lack a charity and open-handedness. But until now they had lived in peace in their little village far from the roads of change and bustle. They feared the introduction of a ferment. 'No, no,' they said, but there was no conviction in their voices.

And the monk knew that he had won. 'Now go,' he said, 'and be sure that charity has always its reward. To give to your own where is the virtue? Charity is to the stranger. Be glad that there has been sent you a chance to earn merit that will be eternal. He must stay here. But send word to the city that they may know.'

He stood there upon the steps looking down at them and his confidence removed their fears. With the ready acquiescence of young children in what they feel is right, they turned away cheerfully. Going down the village road back to their homes they laughed and sang. 'Yes, the monk is right,' they said, and their hearts were lightened.

And the old monk went slowly to the chamber where the man lay. In the darkness he could hardly be made out, only his face made a slight pallor in the gloom. The monk listened and stooped down and touched him. 'Yes, he will live,' he said. 'He is not ill, but only very tired. He wants rest, long rest and peace — our peace — and that is all.' So in the shelter of a great compassion the sick man lay and slept.

They came to see him when they heard the news, Gallio and the doctor. They would have removed him, had he been willing, carrying him in a litter to the river, but he would not.

‘No, no,’ he murmured, ‘I am better here. I love this place. I like to sit and look out at the fields across the river to the hills. I like the air, for it is fresh and pure. I like the monks, they are so silent. I like to hear the children singing in the dawn. I am quite happy.’

So they did not press him and the doctor said to Gallio: ‘Leave him alone for a time. His broken limb will mend quickly, but it is more than that. His blood is full of fever. He is weak and tired. He has been doing too much, going up and down regardless of sun and rain, working without a pause in this hot climate. He will do well here, better than anywhere, till we can send him home.’

They went away and left him as he asked them.

So he stayed there in the monastery. His chamber had windows on three sides that looked out upon the land. From high up where he was upon a watershed he could see the whole great valley from mountain range to range with the broad river winding through it. By day it glowed and trembled under the sun, at night the moon threw silver dreams upon it. The life was full of quiet and of rest. The only sounds that broke them were the village voices far away, the lowing of the cattle coming home, drowsy sounds that drifted up half heard, and the chanting of the prayers. Three hours after sunset and just before the dawn they sang. The slow Gregorian music was like a song out of the night, full of unknown things of this world and every other. It was a farewell to the day that passed, a welcome to the dawn. The night was deeper and the day more glorious because of it. He lay, and thoughts came to him out of the silence — new thoughts from a new silence.

† He had been as other men are, he had moved through life and never looked about him. He had never seen a sunrise, the noon and sunset marked but times of day when to do something or cease doing it. The moon he had seen by chance, and had learnt from books as to its changes. On no particular day had he any idea whether it was new or full save from an almanac. He did not know one star from another. The earth was simply a place to be travelled over, where countries and cities are, described in geographies. Fields were to grow crops in, mountains were good maybe to climb or for mountain sheep. The seas were ways for ships and to provide fish. They were all dead mechanical things ruled by unconscious forces which he thought he knew all about.

The trees and plants, the animals and birds were little better. They were for food, for sport, for clothing. These also mechanical forces ruled, force and chance. His religion told him the world was evil and soulless, his science told him it was a rude, imperfect mechanism. As for himself, he had found it a place to work and play in, that was all. It had no other connection with him. He had a soul, as he supposed; it had not. And this soul of his was on this earth but for a fleeting moment and went thereafter elsewhere. Of what use to interest oneself in a world that was so dull in itself and so brief an habitation? It might be pretty sometimes in its mechanical way, but really all that he had to do with it was to make use of it. There was no tie between him and it. So it had seemed to him. But now, lying quietly there with leisure to feel instead of always doing, with time to think, Nature began to call to him. He shared her moods. He felt her sadness



when the sun was dying in the west and bathed the world in glory; the serenity of the night was as a peace that held his spirit, and when the dawn silvered all the east, when the earth awoke again and laughed with utter happiness, his heart leapt with the gladness of all things.

He felt his pulses rise and fall answering to the pulse of all the world. The life about him was his life also, and he was part of it. The spirit called to him, he answered.

The birds and beasts no longer seemed automata, to use, to drive, to kill just at his pleasure. From out the oxen's dreamy eyes something looked forth to his. The birds without his windows singing in the trees their love and gladness, had they no souls? The dogs obedient to the call, who died to save the flock entrusted to them, had they no righteousness? Had indeed the soul of man no kinship with them? Were they 'the beasts that perish'?

And of a sudden it came to him that life was beautiful. Not effort only, not work nor play, success, achievement, wealth or fame or honour, but life itself. To live was good. The hours, the golden hours, were not just empty spaces between two clock-beats, to fill with acts. They were themselves a glory. To sit and let the crystal flood of time pass over him was purest pleasure. Not his life only but all life was good. To feel the great and glorious stream of the world's life pass on, to be one with Nature and to hear her sing. For she goes forward to a music. It is not always a battle chant she moves to. In her song there are all things. The shout of triumph and the cry of those who fall are there; but there are also other notes, the ripple of the river on its stones, the murmur of the trees, the rhythm

of the sap that rises in them, the thunder in the hills. It is a song of infinite harmonies.

Now for the first time he heard it.

Then he began to think.

His life had all been occupied by work, with play between. From boyhood up he had always worked, always pressed forward. There had been a fever in his blood, a restlessness that would not leave him. He had gone forward from one thing to another, and everything he gained he threw aside for something more. He was as a man who started forth at dawn to march. He went quickly, surmounting ridge after ridge, ever finding new rises on before him. He had been proud he went so fast and surely, delighting in the difficulties he met only to overcome, in the pleasures by the way. Then at noon he sat him down to rest. He looked back on the way he came, and on all sides, and wondered. He had travelled far, but where was he arrived? Certainly at no goal. Whither did he go in future? He had no map. He knew not what lay before. And more, he did not know whither he wished to arrive, if there was any place that he would care to get to. What use was there in ever climbing up a ridge to find another and another, and at the end nothing; to find he had gone round and round and had arrived nowhere, was at last where he started? 'After all,' he thought, 'though work is good, and play is good, it would be as well to know whither it leads. Does it lead anywhere? Living is being, and dying is but a part of that. Existence includes the past, the present, and the future. And effort, incessant, intense and unreflective, is pursued only because an anodyne is necessary to prevent the recognition that we know nothing of what we have been, are, and will be. We

dare not lift our eyes from the earth before us lest we should see at once that we are lost and arrive nowhere except at death.

‘And then? What then?’

He had heard many explanations — one had been taught to him from his childhood — he had paid little heed to any of them. They had seemed to him unreal, apart from life, not concerned with the affairs of every day. They were indeed inconsistent with the work of life and might safely be neglected. They were sad, and he disliked sadness as a form of weakness to be faced and defeated. The troubles of life brought sadness enough without cultivating it. They were mainly concerned with death while he was concerned with life; they denounced this world and all it held. They held out to him a code, which, containing much that he admired, was imperfect, and they offered him a reward he cared not for.

For to him it seemed, little as he had realised of it, that the world was mainly a pleasant, not a dreary place at all, though the devil might have some hand in it here and there. Life should be made the best of, not the worst. His ideals were gaiety, happiness, courage, not tears, sorrow, fear. He recoiled from these. He did not believe a gate of tears would lead anywhere worth going to.

If there was truth in this world, it must be strong, not weak, it must be like wine and make a man glad and firm. It must support and not enfeeble. And if in reality this that he had been taught was the only truth there was, then why have truth at all? Falsehood could do no more than make men miserable and lead them through unrestful lives to a place that they had no desire to reach.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TRUTH AND THE IMAGE

THEREFORE when again a month later Gallio returned and urged him to come back, he shook his head. 'Come back?' he said; 'why should I come back? I am quite happy here.'

And Gallio answered: 'It is not "why should you come back," but "why should you stay?"' How can you be happy here? What is there to do?'

He laughed. 'To do? There is nothing, nothing I must do, nothing I could do. That is the beauty of it. Therefore I do just what I like, and that is — nothing.'

'How do you kill the time?'

'I do not kill it, I do not want to kill it. The hours are my friends. I love them and they linger with me unafraid. They give me time to see things and to understand.'

'What things?' asked Gallio.

He answered looking through the window to the sun-steeped land that lay before it. 'Everything: the sun, the light, the fields, the rivers and the winds; the people who live in these little villages beneath the trees, who have their thoughts and dreams about the world; the monks who sit above here and strive through all the hours — and in the end perhaps, myself.'

Gallio laughed. 'The sun,' he said; 'you will not learn much about it here except that it is hot. You

have no books on science that I see with you, though I can lend you some. As to the stars, the monks here know little of astronomy and of that little most is wrong. The fields are cultivated well, but in a rough, unscientific manner; you will learn more from the Agricultural Ledger in my office than from the cultivator in the fields. As to their thoughts and dreams and their religion, what value have they? Animism thinly overlaid with Buddhist teachings; that is all.'

'Oh,' was the answer, 'I do not mean the things you say. I mean quite other matters. Is there any book that tells you what life is, all life? and is there nothing in a beast or bird or plant but just how best to bring it to material use? And do you think that sticking little labels of "Animist" and "Buddhist" on beliefs and on traditions brings you any nearer knowing what they mean and whence they came? They are not pots of jam, "raspberry and currant mixed," or "apple flavoured with lemon." Is there anything more shallow than to attribute names to things you cannot understand, and thereupon try and persuade yourself, and others, that you know anything about them?'

'Do you think that there is anything worth learning in them?'

'It is the beginning of knowledge, of understanding. Do you suppose that beliefs and superstitions are things that exist separately, that can be classified, and that a people takes a patch here and a patch there and makes itself a many-coloured garment therewith to clothe its spiritual nakedness? I know that men who do not want to think satisfy themselves with such a theory, but ——'

‘But? You are about to ask if I am one of them. Well, no. But the fact is this, that though I have learned many of the people’s traditions, I never saw anything in them but a childishness natural to an uncivilised people. We had similar ones and have grown out of them. Some are poetic truly, but of what possible significance save as nursery stories? You think differently?’

The man was silent; then after a long pause he said: ‘Yes, I think differently. I think that the beliefs of a people, any people, are not a patchwork but a whole. I think that they are not ideas merely but the varied expressions of some innate and infinite truth; of one truth; that is of one concept of the world. Legends and tales, the spirits of hills and rivers, of the trees and flowers, of the birds and beasts are but expressions, dimly, almost dumbly, told of some great concept of their nature and their relationships to each other and to man. For man is of this world, he is not apart from it but of it, not his body only, but the life and soul that has built and animates that body. We are in the world and of the world, and that is what the East knows and feels now, and has always done. It is an impossible thing to imagine that you can by considering man alone arrive at any truth worth having. Life is a great whole. There are not different lives but one life, manifested in different ways but always one. That is what the East has been sure of, what the West has never known. The West has studied man, the East has studied the soul that is the world. The Eastern peoples’ conception of man is bound up with their conception of all life. Religion means to them not a little bit of the soul of man, but

it embraces all the whole universe as far as they can see it and the whole of man. It is Catholic as the word is never known in the West. Religion is everything to them. Therefore to understand that part of it which is concerned with man you must begin at the beginning, for man is but the end, the present climax.'

'You think,' said Gallio, musingly, 'that they think otherwise than we do? and that you can learn what it is they think?'

'Of the answer to the first question I am sure,' he answered. 'All their conduct, all their legends and traditions show that they have some concept of nature differing from ours. All the East has it. Whether I can learn it is not so certain. I can but try. And I think — I think that I may learn it.'

'Suppose you do,' said Gallio. 'What then? Is it that you think that their concept is true?'

'It will be surely true because it comes to them from nature. It is given to them. It will be a facet of the truth and it will be a key to many things, it is the secret of the East. Why does the East believe, why has the West never done so? You know it never has. All history shows the West as unbelievers. There have been Churches who have dragooned the people, who have driven them to prayers, forced them into the faith, killed them for heresy and unbelief. Yet they have never believed. They have but hidden their scepticism, and once the pressure past have broken into unbelief again. The history of all Churches is of perpetual struggle to enforce a creed, never successful. There have been religious men, there have been waves of faith that came, and ebbed and disappeared. At its best never has it received more than a tithe of life

or conduct. But in the East all men have their religion, all men believe truly and earnestly. They have not to be driven, to be forced to a pretence. Only the Semitic Faith of Islam has persecuted and conquered and converted. The Great East has held its faiths because they were in accordance with the whole of life. No man is ashamed because of his religion, no man scoffs at it secretly. It is a nature with them. Why?’

‘But tell me, how can you learn their view of life? Truly the East has been studied enough, Buddhism has been written of and explained till one is weary of it. There is little new in it, and what is new is not intelligible, is vague and dim and misty. What new theory can you discover?’

‘I will begin at the beginning. No one has done that. They have studied but the top. They have done as the West has always done, convinced that religion concerns man’s soul alone, not the world about him, not his body even. I will begin at the beginning.’

‘What is that beginning?’

‘Their beliefs of nature, their legends, those that they believe with heart and soul as they do many.’

‘Idle allegories of the sunset or the dawn, or old-world tales.’

‘Not so. They are a way of saying something, a something that is true to them and therefore true for all the world, a side of truth, a glimpse of the great Light. Why do they all believe in transmigration? What is transmigration? What do they mean by it?’

‘A foolish fancy.’

‘To us yes, to them no. To us yes, because we do not understand what they wish to say. To them no, because it expresses something true. We mistake the



form for the truth and cannot see below, they are careless of their creeds and images because every one of them is conscious of the truth that lies beneath. Each Oriental understands the other because each has the key. We have not. So we mistake. We laugh, and when we laugh the folly is ours. We think we laugh at them, but what indeed we jeer at is our own misconceptions. We laugh the laugh of ignorance.'

'Why then,' asked Gallio, 'trouble about the East? Are there none in Europe that may serve your purpose?'

'There used to be. All peoples emerging from their childhood bring with them in their superstitions expressions of primæval truths. These are the bases on which all other truths are formed. But in Europe they have all been killed. They are dead, and their casings but survive in books as you may find a fossil in a rock. Yet they are not really dead but only sleep, and would awaken if allowed. For truth never dies completely or changes, though the form in which it is made manifest may and must change. But it has never time now to grow and to develop and to express itself anew. It is stifled in its birth. From their earliest childhood now the people are brought up in and taught the grimmest, saddest materialism. They are never allowed to feel, never allowed to think. They have a science that knows only the body, not the spirit; they have a faith that tells them that nature is an evil, soulless thing. The truths that are within the hearts of all are never allowed to grow. There is no ignorance so deep as that of the schooled European. I feel it, for I shared it. Now it is leaving me, and I know that the secret beginnings of all truth lie not in the heaven above, not in

men's hearts or souls, but in the world about us. All Nature has a message to us if we would but listen to her voice. These people listen, they have heard it and they hear it. I will learn it from them; or I will learn from them how I may hear it too.'

Then Gallio went away and wondered, for he cared nothing for all these things. Legends, he thought, traditions, belief in fairies, stories of naiads and of wood gods were all imagination, tales from the nursery days of men. What could one find in them any more than one could find in nursery rhymes, in 'Little Jack Horner,' or 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'? They were amusements of a people's childhood or, at best, natural phenomena seen vaguely and mistakenly. Such tales as did not take their origin in this way, were inventions of priests to stupefy the vulgar, as indeed were all religions. He went away and left his friend to what he considered very foolish waste of time.

But the days that came and went in golden glory, the nights with diamond-studded darkness, brought to him very other counsel.

'Imagination! can men imagine what has never existed? Is it any explanation to say a thing has been imagined? What is imagination? It is that which reflects the image of things that are. No one has ever imagined that which was not. It is a magic mirror held to nature. If the mirror be distorted the likenesses of things are all awry, they may be misty, dim, and faint. But beautiful or not, imagination only reflects what is. And when the mirror is a true one, then it reflects also that which lies beneath the face of things. To say that any belief is the product of imagination is to say that it is a reflection of something.

What does it reflect? What real thing was before the mental glass that cast this image?

'Therefore their meaning is something true and something that exists.

'As to the words, the form in which the tales are told, all words which tell of immaterial things are only symbols taken from the concrete. We "understand," that is to say that mentally "we stand under." All our emotions, thoughts, ideas, all the inner life must be expressed in symbols that are taken from the outer. We cannot express any spiritual idea except by material figures. It is so with single words, and with the tracery into which the words are wrought. We speak in parables, every one does, must do. We speak in finite terms, for all we know is finite. If we want to speak of what we call the infinite, we have only a negative, "that which is not finite," therefore inexpressible. We know a spiritual truth; a love, a hate, an insight into life, but we have only earthly words to express our knowledge.

'All legends and beliefs that people have, that they believe, that they are sure are true, are parables of some spiritual truth. The parables may be clear or less clear. When they were new, when they were spoken they were clear. He who spoke them, they who heard them knew the truth beneath, they felt the life beneath the outer garment. The words awoke in them the music, the thrill, the sense of truth. They heard and understood, because they were in harmony, because they held the truth. A speaker is he who plays upon his hearers' heartstrings; they who hear and understand are they whose heartstrings are in one accord. As violin answers unto violin so does heart to heart. And

they who made these legends heard the music of the spheres, and brought it closer to earth and gave it unto men.

‘But words and images grow old. They may become but cases where no life lingers, like the empty shells a life once built that now lie derelict and dead.

‘You will never learn of the life from looking at the shell alone. Life learns from life, catching its waves and its emotions. Brain learns from brain, and heart from heart.

‘Therefore,’ he said, ‘to sit and study the forms that these beliefs are wrapped in were a foolish thing. Many men have done it and learned nothing, how should they learn of life from death?’

✕ ‘The life and truth of these beliefs lies not in their words, but in that meaning the believer feels in them. It is he who makes the dead forms live with life from out himself. Melody lies not in the notes upon the paper, not in the instrument, not in the player’s fingers, but in his heart and in the hearts of those who thrill to hear. It is an echo. If you are deaf no echo comes, aye though you should read the notes and watch the player’s fingers move. I have been deaf and am. Now I will learn to hear the music. I will attune myself so that I may hear that which they hear. Then shall I know what these things mean. And once I have the key, that key, once I can hear, then shall I be able to explain perhaps in other words and other images which may be understood.’

He waited listening in this silence, letting his heart go out to the glory and beauty of the world. And behold the music came.

## CHAPTER IV

One impulse from a vernal wood  
May teach you more of man,  
Of moral evil and of good,  
Than all the sages can.

THE rains were over; the warm, wet wind that blew from the seas of the south was stilled, the thunderstorms that had stalked forth from the mountains like great purple giants, full of sound and fury, came no more. The days were still, but at evening came a whisper from the north — a wind that told of different things. It was fresh with the breath of mountains that rose into the roof of the world, it was cool from the touch of snows that had lain untainted through the centuries. It crisped the river into ripples of gay laughter, it laid its fingers on the skin sodden with months of heat and stung it into vigour, it chased the languid currents of the blood into a swifter life. For it brought with it the gladness and the eagerness of youth, the beauty of new things new made for those who love them. His strength increased and he began to go abroad.

When he first went down among the village people they regarded him with fear and with suspicion. What did he want with them, this stranger from so far away? Was he one of their rulers trying to learn things, how to increase the taxes maybe; or had he some scheme for making money presently out of them? They feared him, that he might laugh at them or sneer, or, worse

than all, lecture and try to improve them. They kept away from him and in his presence a silence fell upon them.

But as day after day passed and they found in him only a smile or a word the suspicion passed. He came and went so quietly, he listened to them when they talked to him, he spoke so little that they forgot. And after a while they ceased to take especial notice of him, he had become familiar to them, part of their daily life, and they were friends.

So evening by evening as the long shadows passed across the land he went down from his monastery dwelling to the village. Sometimes he would sit by the well curb where the women drew their water. He saw them coming down in twos and threes running, lingering, laughing by the way, dipping the water into their earthen jars, casting sidelong looks at the lads who watched from far. They tossed him little greetings and told him the village gossip. He joined the elders by the great tree near the gate and listened to their talk of crops and seasons. And as he grew stronger he went further abroad, going with the reapers in the dark before the dawn to their fields beside the forest edge, passing the hot hours in the shadow of the trees and coming back with them at nightfall when the home-going cattle filled the lanes. And so the life of the people, of the earth, the woods and the streams, the forest creatures passed into his blood. He grew in harmony with them and understood them.

It seemed to him sometimes that he had stepped back into the ages when the world was young. Here was the world the Greeks had lived in, here was what the poets sang. Glory and loveliness had never passed

away but still existed. All the gods yet lived to those who still had ears to hear their voices in the forest sounds, eyes to see them flitting through the darkened woods or bathing in the mountain pools. The people knew them, and they talked of them and told him stories. Were the trees alive? Surely they were. They had their life, they were not dead unlovely things, but living. Every grass and bush and tree had its own life that came straight from the fount of life. There was not a little separate life hid in each plant, but there was a flood of life coming from who knows where, that poured upon the world and passed into its veins. It made the sap move, the blood flow, it was life, and where it was not there was death.

The life came from that which is unknown, all present, what shall we call it? God? It were better without a name, this nameless source of life, for the word God is mixed up with ideas of personality and limitation very foreign to their thoughts. Yet it is not a blind force, it comes not undirected, nor by chance, dumbly, without consciousness or knowledge. No! All forms of life are under the care and the direction of a Consciousness, a Righteousness, a Knowledge, are subject to it, are one with it. It is never a dull, blind stream of energy ruled by a hapless chance, but a life ruled by a Right.

That was the first thing that he learned, not because the people told him but because he felt that it was so. He felt the presence of the great throbbing life that filled all things, which answered to the life within himself. Nature grew very near to him. He listened to the voices of the dawn. He watched it arise, the immeasurable miracle of day; he saw the couriers of

the sun beat crimson light along the mountain's brow. He saw the king arise in all his majesty and look in strength and glory over all the world. He listened in the woods and heard the branches whisper secrets to each other. The breezes rustled in the palm fronds overhead and talked and laughed and moaned.

At eve the jungle fowl came out to feed in open places. The cocks, proudest and gayest of brave birds, strutted and stamped and called defiance, — the meek brown hens ran to and fro. The partridges laughed out ha-ha, ha-ha, the brown quails crept and whistled in the grass. The day died in scarlet agony, and across the throbbing skies the wild geese passed in long processions.

Then the night came in majesty with robes of softest velvet. In the deep gloom the whole world changed. You could not see things, only divine what they might be; the darkness hid them in a veil of mystery. The deer came down to drink, the leopard padded stealthily towards his prey. Birds of ill omen cried, the owl, the night-jar. And there were sounds that came he knew not whence, voices of the night.

Then again the dawn.

Dead Nature? Dead souls they are who have not felt the fellowship of all the life that lives.

Not such were these he lived among. They knew and felt that all life was one, came from one source. The reapers told him of the grasses and the crops and trees, how in order to get your daily food you must have knowledge of the laws, the righteousness that govern their increase. How you must be acceptable to the god of harvest. The hunters told him of the animals. They have their laws, their god who cares



for them. He tells them what to do and what they must not. Do you think the deer, the leopard, the little partridge that runs amid the corn, have never any laws? Is man the only living thing that has a right and wrong? Every living thing has right and wrong. There are things that are right and wrong for them to do, things that are right and wrong for others to do to them.

The deer when in herds have laws that no one may transgress, the wild dogs have a code of discipline harder than any army. He who transgresses it is killed. The leopards have their beats each for himself. All wild nature has its ethics differing for each kind. And the hunter has his ethics too, that nature made.

‘There is that hill,’ the hunter said, ‘that lies above the stream where the wood is thick, that is the sanctuary. No one may hunt there. And why? Because the forest god forbids it. There are such places everywhere. And if there were not, if the forest god had never made such sanctuaries the game would disappear. That is the law the god has given us, so that we kill not all the jungle beasts. He lets us kill at time and place, but there are other times and places when they must have rest. That is a law. Those who break it suffer.’

And the man laughed because he had often heard it called a stupid superstition of the people, these sanctuaries for game. And he knew how in places where these had been broken by those who had no belief in the gods of Nature the game had disappeared.

They told him all they knew of the souls of trees and beasts, and he listened and he understood, because the truth was coming to him. He told them all that Western science has discovered of the body, how it

had evolved from lower forms, and they listened and they understood, because the truth was in them. He showed them sometimes how the beasts and birds were coloured for protection to enable them to hide, sometimes their colours were conspicuous for other purposes. He told them how in the long history of the world the forms had changed under the stress of necessity. They heard him and they understood. It was not a new idea, but one they had always held though dimly, and not worked out as Western science has worked it. They had known always that the bodies of men and animals had risen. This truth was in harmony with other truths they had within them.

✓ 'True, true,' they said. 'It is true. We have seen, and though we could not explain as you do, we know that it is so.'

Yet sometimes they dissented, not from his principles but from his facts.

'No, no,' they said about the leopard. 'How could his colour, his yellow and his spots, be given him to hide him? Why should he hide? Whom does he fear? No one. And he is nocturnal, he seeks his food by night and not by day, not in the sunshine. His gold and mottled skin cannot be for this reason. He would be coloured grey for use, if use were all.'

'What then do you think?'

'Because it is beautiful.'

For to their eyes everything that Nature does, everything she makes is beautiful. It is the strongest, most abiding feeling that comes to every one who knows, that in all her acts Nature seeks beauty. Not perhaps as the first necessity, not perhaps as an end, but because it is her way. The tiny pencillings upon the partridge

are as wonderfully done as the gay colours of the parakeet. The bronze gloss upon the snipe is as glorious as the pheasant's magnificence. The hidden things are no less beautiful, no less carefully finished than those that show. She works for no eye but for her own, she cares not if what she makes be visible or hidden. She sees, she knows. The rootlet in the earth is perfect as the grass blade above. She has her conscience and her consciousness.

The wild world is beautiful and happy. There is a sense of peace and gladness and of order in the woods and those who live there. All are happy. There are men who live away from nature in cities or shut up within their own imaginings, who think and say that nature is unhappy. 'Bird preys on insect and on lesser birds, beast upon beast, and death is very near. It hides beneath the leaf, it lurks behind the tree. All live in terror.'

Not so. Truly death is near, but the world fears not death. It does not go in daily, hourly terror. Death is a sudden fear, pang, a medicine to cure all ills. The snipe you fired at a few minutes since and missed is now as happy as it was before. They live in glorious happy health and when they are sick they die. Nature cannot tolerate disease, pain, ugliness, unhappiness, despair among her children. She ends it suddenly, and in abandoning life lives on.

Is this world evil? No a thousand times, seen with true eyes it is a wonder of magnificence. Did it grow by chance, by blind forces acting on dead matter? How came the beauty and the order and the happiness? Animals have consciousness and a sense of right and wrong, and men have higher consciousness. Is con-

sciousness a product of unconscious forces working in unconscious matter?

Men are intelligent, at least some are, and is intelligence a spark that unintelligence brings forth? Is it a science that tells us this? Is it not rather blindness? Could ever any one believe such things? No one who leaving his laboratory stood face to face with Nature and listened to her voice. Our bodies have risen slowly, developed from the beginning, built up from earth's elements. But the life that working in them built them, the life that makes our higher forms to manifest itself more fully in, that life is divine. The East has seen this always, and the West sometimes in glimpses. The world about us, the grasses, trees, the birds and beasts and man, are, as one Western said, 'the living garment of God.' It changes, drawing ever nearer to perfection.

But the East knows it always. It has built upon this knowledge, on a sure foundation. If there are naiads in the streams, spirits of the hills, and fairies in every flower that blows, that is their way of saying what they know. It is a childish way, maybe, but what it says is true.

'It is a greater thing to believe in one Great God than in a myriad gods. The first is true, the latter is a superstition.'

So says the West. Let us consider.

'God's in His heaven,' says the poet of the West. In His heaven far away from us, waiting to judge us maybe. 'God is on earth' the East declares, for God is everywhere, *is* everything. All life is God, straight from His Power House, a thrill of the eternal life. And because to our finite minds to postulate the One,

is to place Him in one place, with one set of attributes, the East prefers to think of many gods. The Eastern God is infinite, and it is truer sometimes to express infinity by very many than by one. That is what the East means, that is what it says. And it understands its own words though we have failed to do so. Yet to the East all gods are God.

Without the village, near a ruined shrine, beside a well that filled itself with ferns, there grew a giant tree. It was a fig, the sacred peepul, under whose branches understanding comes to him who listens. The great branches gave a shade, and some pious soul had placed a drinking-vessel full of clear water for the traveller. On the branches hung a tiny house of wood, and in front were placed the offerings of the people — fruit and rice and flowers. ‘Tell me,’ he asked, ‘what is that tiny box, and why these offerings? For whom are they?’

They answered that in the tree there lived a spirit. The house was for him and the fruit, the flowers. ‘He lives there, he is the tree’s life, the life of all the trees that grow. Trees are all beautiful, we love them, what would be the world without these temples? A life is in them, for a life has built them up, and that life is a god. They are all temples that a divinity has made and given us.

‘So because we wish to remember this, because we do not desire our children should forget it, this the foundation of all truth, we put the symbol of the little house and we bring flowers and fruit. The flowers fade, the birds eat the fruit. No matter. We are realising something we know is true.’

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Child's words, child's deeds. Maybe. Have not men grown up from childhood? Would you destroy the child because he is not a man? Would you destroy a truth because in its expression it is young? Great truths grow up from small ones.

The world was not built by chance, the life is not a dead unconscious force. The world has grown up from the beginning as the expression of an 'increasing purpose.' That is the way the East has always seen it.

## CHAPTER V

### EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL

SOMETIMES he would leave his monastery chamber where he lived so quietly and go with a party of woodcutters or of hunters into the hills that lay towards the north. There they made camps in the ravines near water, building little huts of branches, a shelter more from the heat of day than the cold of night. Yet it was cold, too, when the north wind blew at night, and then they made great fires of logs and brushwood and sat about them. The tawny light flickered upon their faces and gave to them, wearied by the day's work, a new energy. They laughed and talked and they told stories. Sometimes they told him of the gossip of the country side, how there was a child who remembered dimly of a former life and spoke of it. Many such tales there were, and the men who told them laughed. Why did they tell them, why did they laugh? Was it because they thought such tales arose from a truth but were perhaps not a truth? Life is eternal, a previous life there is for every one from the beginning. Just as the body has risen in one unbroken chain through various lower forms hidden in the backward centuries, so has the soul. Yet though the body is one body with that which has seen so many changes, though it bears in it the result, it has no conscious memory. And the life — can it bring a conscious memory of bygone days? They thought not.

They told him birth stories of the Buddha brought from India hundreds of years ago and changed in bringing; they told him legends of their own country. And these were always the best, these were what the hearer wanted, for they came out of their simple hearts — an image of the truths that lay therein. They had a beauty and reality, told as they were.

About them stood the trees in circle, far off upon the hills a long fire burnt, a scarlet circlet that climbed slowly upwards. Out of the dark came sounds — a sambur belled, an owl cried harshly, and sometimes a jackal howled in long-drawn melancholy notes. A falling star would shoot athwart the sky and disappear.

This was one of their favourite tales.

Far in the north there are great mountains growing ever higher towards the unknown land. Dense forests are there, trees such as we never see here, so high and thick, tied to each other by long creepers. And the undergrowth is thick; the sunlight hardly penetrates, and men can scarcely move forward and backward. There are deep ravines, as black almost as night, where silent rivers flow, and there are rocks and precipices and many unknown things.

In these forests there are many deer and there are elephants who crush their way careless of what oppose them. There are wild cattle, bison and bears, and there are many tigers. If you go even a little way into these hills you feel afraid and as if you were lost, for there are no paths.

A wild hill people live there. They are small in stature, dark and timid. They are rarely seen except when sometimes they will move into the plain and change some skins for cloth and salt. They speak a



tongue we cannot understand. They have no villages, but camp now in one place, now in another.

The people of the plains are much afraid of them. They think them half devils, hardly men, and they have stories of them. They say that they can use enchantments and that they speak the language of the beasts. They hear and understand the deer talking to each other and the tigers' growls. They even say that sometimes they change themselves into animals for a time, and then again become men. So frightened are the plain people of these mountains they never go far into them. On the outskirts they cut timber and gather forest produce, but they do not penetrate. They think that once caught among the hills they never could return.

But once there was a man who did go in. He was young and rash and restless, as young men are, and the quiet life of the villages in the plain wearied him. He was tired of ploughing, sowing, reaping, going to little festivals. He wanted adventure and to see new things. So one day he disappeared from his home, and for two years he was not seen. They thought that he was dead, lost in the hills, and they wrote his name from off the village list. Yet one day he returned walking out of the forest changed from a youth into a man, tall and strong, with the keen eye of the hunter and the step of a mountaineer. He had seen and done many things in these two years and they had left their mark on him.

He was not alone. Walking behind him as he came out of the forest was a girl. She was young and her limbs were slender but strong like those of the deer. And her eyes were like the deer's eyes, large and soft, and timid except when she looked at him she

followed, when they grew full of confidence and laughter. He brought her to the village and they settled there.

But the village women did not like her. She was strange, spoke a strange tongue, and her ways were not as theirs were. She did not understand them. She could not enter into their life. She was an outsider, a savage from the hills, and they would none of her.

So the two left the village and built them a hut near to the forest edge beside a stream. And here they lived more happily and in peace. The man hunted and worked and the woman stayed at home, and presently a little girl was born. Then for a time there was complete content.

But the man got weary of this lonely life. He wanted to talk with other men, he wearied for the wider intercourse of his own people. The loneliness fatigued him. Therefore he took to going to the village, sometimes in the day, sometimes in the evening, to hear the news and take a share in village matters. Often he would return quite late. And he would go to the further villages lower down the plain, staying away a day, two days or three.

The woman was much alone. She would spin and weave and prepare the rice, and in the evenings when her husband did not come she would take her baby and go and sit beside the stream looking across. There were the forests and beyond them rose the hills where she was born, where her people roamed. A great desire came upon her to return. The mountain spirits called her, the trees waved to her, the stream went murmuring of the heights whence it had come, of the coolness of the deep ravines. The bonds of a life all in one place, the heat, the solitude oppressed her. The

tears would come into her eyes for all that she had lost. But yet she had her daughter, and when she looked at her, the trouble vanished, laughter came back again and she was content. But the man never noticed. He was employed, he had friends, the plains were his home. He thought his wife grown stupid, that was all.

Then the child died; a fever came out of the swamps and killed it. Husband and wife sorrowed together. For a time they grew nearer. Then they were parted more than ever; the man went oftener to the village and the girl was left alone. She had no one then to talk to, only she called aloud her troubles to the hills that they might hear her.

One night the man returned home late. The door was open and the hut was desolate; he called aloud but no one came. He searched but he found nothing. His wife was gone. But of the cause or reason he could find no sign, until at last searching in the dawn beside the river he came upon a tiger's tracks. He stared at them and he remembered the tales he had often heard. Yes. His wife had changed into a tigress and had gone back to her mountains. She was lost to him for ever. Suddenly the old love he had borne her returned. He remembered how he had found her as a young girl among her people, how he had called and she had followed him. He felt his life was emptied of all happiness. He fell upon the ground and there they found him lying nearly dead. They took him to the village and cared for him, but when he spoke of his wife they shook their heads. 'It is wiser to forget. Such women are best back among their hills.'

But the man would not listen, and at last he heard

news he hoped would help him. In the great City down the far river lived a man reputed of deep wisdom. He might tell the husband what to do, how to get his wife again, for he knew everything. The husband started for the Golden City.

A week he travelled floating on a raft down the great water, passing hamlets, forts, and cities, and on the eighth day he saw the morning sun strike into fire upon a clustered throng of minarets and spires. He knew that he was arrived, and before long he came to where the wise man lived. The wise man saw him and told him certain things, and he, without waiting to see the wonders of the city, turned on the homeward road again. Day and night he marched, quickly with little rest, for hope was in his heart, and at last he came again to his hut beside the stream. Here he made a load of what he wanted, and taking in his hand a spear he went straight into the forest. The way was difficult, there was no path, the trees grew thickly, creepers caught his feet, ravines and precipices barred his way. But he kept on, guiding himself by what he had been told.

At last he came to the place he sought. It was a valley shut between high walls that made it dark. Great rocks dripped water from their sides and there were caves where night lived always. Just before sunset the husband came there and found a cavern underneath a precipice about which creepers hung as in a curtain. Before the cave were strewn white bones and skulls, and there was a sense of horror and of fear.

Opposite the cave mouth he chose a tree and climbed it and waited for the night, for he knew that in that

cave there lay a tigress and that she would come forth at dusk. The tigress was his wife.

He watched and waited and as the dusk fell she came out, grim and horrible with burning eyes. For a time she stood at the mouth of the cave looking forth. Then suddenly with a bound she leapt into the forest. The man waited still, waited till the full night was come, and descending from the tree set ready those things he had brought with him. Then he sat down by the cave and waited.

In the early dawn the tigress returned from her night ravaging. Faint pearly light was dropping from above making all things clear. Far overhead upon the hill-tops was a red sunrise.

She came up to the cave, sated with her prey, her lips stained with blood — she stopped, she stared. For there before her was a spinning-wheel with cotton in it, there was a loom with a half-woven cloth upon it — her own. She stared and of sudden she remembered. She was a woman and no tigress. The woman's heart moved in her, the tawny hide dropped off, her form changed, and she fell upon the ground in tears for she remembered all — herself, her husband, her baby who had been, whose half-wove garment hung upon the loom. Her husband came to her and put his arms about her, and as the sun dropped scarlet arrows through the forest aisles they turned and went away — together. The future was before them and the past forgotten as a dream before the day.

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For the most part the stories had a moral. When a soul rose from being a beast's soul inhabiting a beast's body, to a man's soul in the body of a man, it

was the result of righteousness upon the soul. When it fell it was the result of bad actions, of retrogression. He saw that this theory of transmigration of the soul was the exact counterpart of the evolution of the body. The latter has arisen, little by little, by acquiring new characteristics, a higher form, a more varied complexity. So it is with the soul. Each individual is not a body only but a soul within a body, acting through it, expressed through it. Where an individual rises it is because his whole personality has risen, because he is the expression of a higher soul within a more adapted body. Our bodies have developed from beasts' bodies and as they have acquired merit, so have risen. We acknowledge that in the West because science has shown it to us. But science has stopped halfway. It has ignored the other partner. Man is a life and soul made manifest in body. The body has evolved, says the West, and the East answers that evolution is true of both body and soul. As our bodies have grown so have our souls. As our souls have grown higher so have they evolved higher bodies to inhabit. Each has developed according to the 'merit' it acquired in partnership. That is what transmigration means to say.

And more, men have not always developed upwards. Nations have come and gone, been young and old, and died and disappeared, while new ones took their places. There is a constant ebb and flow, but the flow is greater. Life as a whole advances. There is the increasing purpose doubly manifested. So much was easy. It was evolution. But yet there was a difficulty still, one that lay underneath.

// We are the products of an evolution of a body and a soul. The body in some way we understand, we

know of what we speak. It is not an abiding entity and yet the chain is never broken, never has been. All living forms are in unbroken sequence from the beginning. But they are subject to continued change. Each child comes from two parents, inherits from both, can it be that the soul preserves for ever one unbroken entity? Is it a little nut within a changing kernel?

That is what the West conceives it as. But the East does not. It cannot do so. The East has some conception of our life different to that we have. Life, man's soul is not a separated atom incarnated in a body. How can a force, an energy, a life be separated? Even the lower forces, can they be separated? Can you take a piece of sunlight and place it in any lamp? Life is a stream and not a substance, it is a spirit, not a material thing.

Even material things that live are never permanent. Our bodies are but streams of matter ever changing, ever dying, ever renewed. But dead things are constant, stones and metals. Can life be as a stone is? What are our souls? Until we know how the East understands that much, how shall we understand that which they tell of it?

He asked the people to explain to him but they would not answer. Why?

What are the things that have a ready answer? Those things that we have learnt, that have been taught to us.

Those that have no answer are the things we know. We see, we hear; can any one define, explain what sight and hearing are? Does any one except the deaf and blind desire to do so? We hear and see, that is enough.

We love, we hate. Did ever the boy who loved sit down to analyse his feelings? Never. It is when we doubt if we are really feeling it that we inquire. It is when love has passed we try to bring remembrance of it back by definition and by attribute. What is sunlight? Do you feel it less because you cannot define it? What is a sense of beauty? Who cares who has it clearly? We all have life; and what is life? When you have a conception of what life is that fits into your consciousness as true, that is in harmony with the facts of life, why should you bother? Why should you seek the imagery of words to express to yourself what you have but what you can never fully define? It is when the definition of what life really is, of what our souls are made of, has grown old and untrue, as all dogmas and definitions of the undefinable must do, that finding we are holding a falsehood we look round for truth.

The East has a true conception of what life is. It does not define it. There is no dogma of the soul. The truth is never found within an iron bond. Life is life.

'And yet,' he thought, 'I must have words. When you have a wrong expression the only thing that will correct it is an expression that is nearer truth. Life is not what we conceive it. Life is not an entity. It does not come merely into us at birth and disappear at death. We do not win our futures in the few years between one cradle and one grave. Life is eternal and is subject to the change of evolution always. Then what is life? Where are the words that will come near what I desire to say, that will enable this to be understood? I want a new symbol of what our souls are.'



## CHAPTER VI

Where is he who knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.

THEY sat and watched the night veiling the world in sleep. The darkness stretched into eternity and the stars wheeled upwards in a grand procession. Orion blazed above them and the Pleiad cluster hung like a pearl upon the bosom of the night. There was a deep stillness, for the winds were hushed, a stillness not of death but of a great life that slept and dreamed.

Suddenly from the village down below there came a sound, a cry that pierced the stillness like a pain, and on the cry there came a music. It rose and fell upon the night; now keen with the shrilling of a flute, and brazen with the clang of cymbals, now sad and slow with the sound of strings. Then it failed into the throb of drums that beat — that beat — that beat a measured sadness of monotonous refrain; and the flutes cried again.

The peacefulness of the night was broken, the dark that had been so clear became opaque, the distances closed in. The finiteness of things became more manifest. For in the music was a harshness and a discord that drove the thoughts back into the heart. They would not go abroad in such companionship. The sounds occupied the shrunken night alone.

A man was dead.

He knew that this was the music of the dead. Some

one had died down there. His body lay, a cold and empty shell within the house, amid the mourners. The soul had died, had passed. He whom they had known was gone. But whither? What was it that was gone?

Had it passed through the darkness leaving earth to go to some place very far away, beyond the stars, unknown, to hear its sentence? Had it within a few short years by a little observance of certain maxims, a few good deeds earned a happiness for ever? Or was it sent to limbo for eternity?

Hell must be very large by now; full of tortured souls without a hope. And Heaven, was not that a word for some place whither no one desired to go? The air seemed full of fears, of strange, unseen, unhappy things that passed.

The music ceased and the night grew wide again. The stars looked down with clear, bright eyes upon the world, an immense beauty and a peace filled the heavens, and a whisper came from out the space which said, 'No, no. It is never so. These are but dreams of evil made within the brain. Look upward into the spaces of the sky. No Hell is there.'

Life, what is life?

'Tell me,' he asked the monk, 'what is it you think of life?'

The monk sat silent and did not answer.

'What is man's soul, whence did it come, and whither does it go? A man is dead below there. Men pass upon the wings of every moment that fleets by us. Men are born and die. I am here, whence did I come and what am I? That man is dead. Where is his soul?'

The monk shook his head and answered: 'What

is life? How shall I tell you? Could I measure to you the sea in cupfuls? Yes, more easily than one may measure out infinity in finite words. For life is infinite, it holds the two for evers.'

'Tell at least one aspect of it. Give me a cupful from that sea.'

And the monk answered: 'So be it. A cupful I will give. Only remember it is but a little cup, words are such tiny vessels for the truth.'

He held his hand aloft.

A light wind came from the sleeping earth and breathed across the garden. It murmured in the palm leaves overhead and shook the bushes. The long grasses near at hand bent down before it, shook their feathered heads and swayed like dancing girls.

'Tell me whence comes the wind and whither does it go? Life is a wind that blows upon the world. Whence does it come and whither does it pass? It blows and moves the grasses, and they live. Is then the life within them that they move?'

The wind increased, it brought a scent of meadows far below, of frangipanni odours from the bushes. Some dead leaves fell and the grasses bowed more deeply. 'It comes and goes,' he said; 'no one knows why, nor whence, nor whither.'

He bent and caught a long grass stem and broke it. The slender reed lay lifeless on the ground. Its sisters rustled, swayed and bowed while it lay dead.

'Why does it lie still? Where is its life that made it move? Did a spirit live in it and move it; and has that spirit fled? or is the spirit dead?'

'Life is a breath that comes from the eternal here to us. It is not a thing, a substance that lies within

us, but a tide that pouring on this world builds up our bodies and is itself our souls. It builds our bodies to manifest itself in. Consider. Suppose we sat not in gardens but on a barren rock, and we could only see, not feel. The wind might blow but we should know nothing. It could not stir the rock. The air might move but could not manifest its presence. Life must have proper form to manifest itself in. It has built up our bodies little by little through the ages that it may show itself, that life may live. It raises them ever to manifest itself more fully. Life is from without. It is not a prisoner held in bondage in an earthy cage from which when the bar breaks it flees.'

'And the man's soul?'

'Life lives for ever.'

'The body goes back to earth. Can it not rise again?'

'My friend,' the monk answered, 'think. What are you? Are you the body or the life that built it up and made it live? The frame returns to earth, the wind moves other grasses. Life is not a thing bound to one body, it is not a product of the body. Is the wind a product of the grass? This stem is dead and will return to earth, a man dies and his flesh and bones go back to dust. A body is a finite thing, life is infinite. Would you have the life that moved the leper, for he was a leper whom they mourn below, compelled for all the ages to manifest itself only in that poor body, or in any body however good? Life is a progress and a change. The stream of spirit ever widens and requires greater power to work in, to live in. Each body passes, and from its dust are built our new bodies greater and stronger, better able to perform the behests of the greater spirit.'

'Is there then no immortality of body? Must we go always into forgetfulness? The spirit has an immortality, the body none?' The monk leant closer and took the broken grass and held it up. The wind had ceased and it stood motionless. 'The wind is gone, the grass is dead. The wind has gone to move the leaves and grasses far away. This grass is a dead body. Has it no immortality?' The monk sat long in silence and the stars climbed upward. The night was deeper, it held a personality and a presence.

'It is so hard,' he said, 'to speak of, to put in words, that which one sees and knows to be beyond all words. I thought that all men felt the consciousness of what life is. And yet I remember two thousand five hundred years ago, that was the difficulty. And those who saw and taught were called Mystics, splitters of words, dealers in cloud and fog because they tried to say what never can be fully said. Yet as you ask I will try. Every living thing we see is twofold, it is spirit expressed in matter. Matter is built up by brute forces which act according to fixed laws. The spirit which takes this matter and makes it into living forces is also twofold, unconscious and conscious.

'Take myself or you. Our bodies are built and kept by forces that are unconscious; we breathe, our pulses move, our food is turned to blood by no conscious effort of our own. They will work when our conscious life is asleep or absent. By them is our body formed. It comes from our parents and inherits from them its qualities, its strength and weakness. The rewards that they have earned it reaps, the punishments they have incurred it suffers from.

'But conscious life is different. That comes not

from inheritance, not from our parents. It manifests itself within the body, but is not of it. It affects it. The greater our consciousness, the greater the master, the more obedient is the servant. It is affected by the body, which is its instrument through which it manifests its life and consciousness. They are bound together; yet each is different, and each gives to other immortality. Each has its laws which it obeys or disobeys. Again there is this difference.

‘The soul is immortal always, but the body, that stream of bodies which began so far back we cannot see it, and come through our parents to ourselves, may suddenly be stopped.’

He took the grass and held it up. The ears were full of seeds. ‘There is its immortality,’ and he shook them to the ground. ‘The grass that is well-grown and healthy, that is strong and can maintain itself, that is capable of change as the surroundings change, it lives.

‘And so on with personalities that we call “I.” We are a conscious spirit in a living but unconscious body. When the body deserves to live, when the future needs it, then it lives in children, but if not, then is the race cut off. The stream of bodies ends. The force goes to other streams, to other children. That is our immortality, and before consciousness came that was the only immortality, of personality, of type.

‘But our conscious life is different, a man’s body is continued in his children, but not his soul, his conscious life. That is the wind that passes.’

‘The wind passes,’ said the man, ‘and has no personality. And when man dies is that so too with him, his consciousness, his soul? Does that too merge into a formless wind?’

The monk shook his head.

‘That personality continues also. It goes on with all the merit and demerit it has acquired. It goes on for ever, until — until ——’

‘Until?’

‘What is beyond the stars, beyond the utmost star? What is infinity?’

‘No one can tell.’

‘That is the answer. No one can tell. Why should we wish to know? Is it not enough to see a little space before you, a day’s march on in front? One idea is this, that as there was a time when unconscious life existed alone without consciousness, so in time we may grow to that perfection that Consciousness and Will and Righteousness may exist without the confining bounds of matter and unconscious life. But the truer thought is that the conscious life, the Soul, will be blended with all the forces into one great whole, infinite, universal.’

There was a long silence, and the man sent his soul into the night to seek from its peace, its dignity, its space a little of its truth.

Then the monk rose and said: —

‘The night is late. I go. My friend, remember this. Knowledge and wisdom are not plucked down from heaven. They grow on earth. They are built up from lower things, from right and understanding.’

He passed away into the shadow of the monastery.

But the man sat there and thought. ‘Truly,’ he said, ‘no one can define life, and any definition, any attributes must be but temporary and even in its time but partly true. It were better there were no need to try and make any definitions; yet there is

need. Because if you do not consciously give a meaning to the word "life" you will do so unconsciously. And the unconsciously given meaning will arise from the letter and form of mere imagery, and so be quite untrue. No one in the West ever began by formulating to himself the soul as a little material nut, a piece of matter. Yet there is no doubt that is how the West has come now to regard it. Some even say they have seen the soul escape — a filmy gas; others say they have weighed it, an ounce or so. The West now unconsciously uses the words "soul" and "life" with meanings which when consciously faced are absurd.

'Therefore we must have a conception, some definition, some attributes, even if they are negative attributes like those of the geometric point. Remembering always that at best they can be but a glimpse at truth. Therefore what is life? Where is the image, where the words?'

The long reaches of the river showed a faint reflection far below, and suddenly in the distance came a light. It was a long and ghastly greenish ray that pierced the darkness like a spear. And brandished by an unseen giant hand it touched now one bank, now the other. Wherever it was laid it called, like a magic wand, visions out of the night. Things before invisible suddenly became seen, trees and rocks and stretches of bare sand started into a sudden vividness, and disappeared again.

And through the silence came the faint throbbing of the steamer's heart as she beat her way up against the current.

Then she came into sight, a cluster of bright lights, a myriad-jewelled water creature breasting the stream,



and ever before her she held her arc light feeling her way with it round curve and island. She passed beyond the bluff and out of sight.

Then he remembered how many years before the first steamer came with incandescent lights in place of the old lamps. She was a wonder on the river. The people crowded down at night to look at these bright globes that shone on nothing. They came on board and looked and touched but did not understand. What was the light within the little glasses? How was it lit and how fed? How was it killed?

When some told them that the light did not live within the globes but came every moment to them along a hidden wire, they laughed; surely he joked with them. The wires did not glow, in fact they saw no wires. How could light come unseen and shine? how come from without? That was not the way of lights. No! No! Some one put the light in and took it out again.

That was twenty years ago, and now it seems to any one the simplest thing. There need not even be a wire.

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Life comes for ever from the Power House of God. Where is that House? No one can tell. What does it matter to the light? And when the lamp is broken and the light suddenly goes out what is become of the energy that made it glow? Does it wander homeless in the void? Is it gone to judgment because the light was dim?

That is a parable of life.

\* \* \* \* \*

The night grew later. Down below the music had long ceased, only the drums throbbed softly now and then. The cries were stilled, but there was the sobbing of a woman half unheard.

*Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe. Et tout renait.*

## CHAPTER VII

The tree whose roots were in the earth, whose branches stretched to heaven.

‘If you are interested in those superstitions, I have a story to tell you,’ said Gallio. ‘Do you believe in ghosts?’

They were in his camp pitched near the river where he had come to shoot.

‘Do you believe in ghosts?’ he asked again. ‘The people do, and so if you care for their beliefs and think that they sometimes contain truth, you should accept their ghosts.’

The hearer laughed. ‘Tell me your story first,’ he answered. ‘I have heard many tales of ghosts. I have looked often to see a ghost but never successfully. Tell me your story.’

‘It began with a mystery and a probable crime,’ said Gallio. ‘Have you heard of the disappearance of a broker down the river?’

‘I hear little,’ was the answer, ‘of the gossip of the countryside or of the crime. What was the disappearance?’

‘He lived in a village on the other side the river, forty miles or more below here. He was a broker who dealt in grain and seeds and was reputed rich. He used to advance money to farmers against their crops and be repaid in produce. It is a lucrative trade enough except when bad years come and the

farmers cannot pay. Last year was such a season, and he had many debtors who could not pay him as their crops had failed.

‘One afternoon about two months ago his clerk whom he had sent to try and collect some debts returned. The times were bad, he reported; the debtors could not repay either in cash or produce, and asked for more delay. This made the broker angry, and he declared that no delay would be given. They must pay at once, and as the clerk had not been successful he would go himself. He had his pony saddled and went off at once alone. There was nothing unusual in this. He was a man of hasty decision and who acted on the spur of the moment.

‘That night he slept at a village some eight miles up the river, and next morning early, he went into another village where two of his heaviest debtors lived. He had a stormy interview with them. They said they could not pay, and in the afternoon he rode on again declaring he would go to the police post, some twelve miles higher up, and lodge a complaint that they had cheated him.

‘The way for some distance lies across the open fields, where tracks cross and recross. There is a well there, near a little rest-house, and two women who were at the well saw him come over the fields. He inquired the way of them, saying he had never been that road before. Then he rode on. That is the last that we could hear for certain of his movements. He disappeared. Next morning his pony was found wandering loose in the scrub jungle near the river and caught. That first raised inquiry. The matter was reported and the police went down.

‘But little more could be elicited. Two herd boys said they saw a man on a black pony with his face muffled in a cloth, riding through the bushes near the river bank at dusk. There is no road there, and it was quite out of the broker’s way if going to the village where the police station is. Still it might have been he, gone in some way astray.

‘A search through all the country near had no result. Nothing was found, no body, no traces of any kind. The broker had disappeared utterly.

‘There were of course several theories. He had fallen over the river bank and been drowned; but though the banks there are high and steep, there was at that time no water under them. The river was at its lowest and left a broad belt of sand on either side. If he had fallen it would have been on sand.

‘That he had been murdered was another theory. His debtors, knowing where he was going, had slipped ahead of him, and waylaid him in the dark. There was a belt of jungle further on. But if so, where was the body? And, as it happened, there was a festival that night at an intermediate village, and the road, usually lonely, was traversed by numerous people. None of these had seen the broker. No one had heard anything. Variations of these theories supposed him to have been run away with by his pony, which was a spirited little beast, thrown and killed; or carried off a prisoner by his enemies. The only objection to each and every theory was that it had not the least scrap of evidence to support it. The man had disappeared, that was all we knew. The whole countryside was turned upside down but nothing was discovered.’

‘And the ghost?’

'We are coming to it. The broker had a daughter, a girl about sixteen. A few days after her father's departure, in the afternoon, she was sitting in the house and thought she heard her father call her. She thought he had returned, and saying to her mother, who was in an inner room, "Here is father back," she ran out and down the steps. Her father was standing by the entrance gate, but she noticed at once that something was the matter. His head was dropped on one shoulder, there was blood upon his face, and in a moment he disappeared. The girl gave a cry and fainted, and the neighbours running in found her senseless on the ground.

'That was the first appearance of the ghost. The second happened a week or so later. Two fellow-villagers of his were returning from a journey to the north, riding in a bullock cart, and travelling at night, as is the custom in the hot weather. On their way they passed the place where the broker was last seen. The remembrance of him came to them and they wondered what had happened. For sure, they thought, he must be dead, and his ghost lost in these distant fields must be weary and sad so far from home. They were full of compassion for the ghost so lonely, far away, and standing up in the cart one called — "Brother villager, if your ghost is here, come home with us." His voice echoed over the empty fields and had no answer. But, so they tell the story, a sudden fear came over them, a silence and the sensation that they were not alone. Some one had joined them. And so driving through the night they came to their village with the ghost in company. That very morning early, fishermen returning from their night fishing, found a

corpse on a sandbank just opposite the village. They towed it in, and though much disfigured, it was identified by the wife and buried. So ghost and body came home the same day to their old village. What think you of that for a ghost story?’

‘It is a strange tale and yet ——’

‘Do you believe in ghosts? I have told you my story, answer now my question. Do you think ghosts exist?’

The man pondered. ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘and No. If you mean that man’s soul does not become extinct at his death, then Yes. If that it exists as a filmy shadow, half-lunatic, helpless and ghastly; that it lingers in graveyards and old places to frighten people, unable to speak or communicate with us except by signs or knocks, then No. If you mean, do I believe the broker’s daughter and the cartmen saw his disembodied spirit, I answer that I do not believe anything of the sort.’

Gallio laughed. ‘Then I will end my story. The broker had no ghost, his spirit was never disembodied, he never died. He ran away to cheat his creditors, and hid for three months up the river. He has now returned.’

‘And the body?’

‘Was that of a boatman drowned a hundred miles above, a week before.’

‘And the ghost? Was it an invention?’

‘For that, No. I am sure the girl was honest and thought she saw something. So too were the cartmen. I have ascertained that they did not know that the broker was not dead. And even if, in that case, there could be any doubt, I know many others. Only two days ago when riding here my orderly thought he saw

a ghost. We were riding through the low hills and lost our way. The country was barren, and wastes of rock and sand, with here and there a thorn bush. There were faint tracks which led here and there and ended. We were far from any village or any cultivation, and I stopped to look about and consult my orderly as to the way. While we were talking he suddenly said, "There is a woman over there, I will ask her." He galloped off and I followed. I saw no woman and presently the orderly stopped too, bewildered, looking round. "I saw a woman pass," he said; "she came from behind that rock, and went behind this bush; she is not there."

'There was no woman, could never have been any, we must have found her had there been. There was no place to hide in. Except for that one rock and a dozen widely divided bushes there was nothing within half a mile that would have hidden a dog. We searched the place thoroughly: I, certain that there must be a woman somewhere; the orderly pale as a ghost himself, sure he had seen one. At last we gave it up and rode on. But for that matter you may find as many stories of ghosts, as many people who are sure they have seen them, as you desire. And whatever they are, they are not conscious frauds.'

'I will tell you,' he answered, 'what Buddhism says of these things. Beliefs like this are never based entirely on conscious frauds. But this idea of ghosts, of visions, of revelations, stands on a different footing from legends and tales. For they are declared to be discovered facts. If they were but legends, it would be easy to say that they were merely one way of expressing our instinctive belief in the immortality of the soul and



the survival of personality. Indeed, it is no doubt only because the belief in ghosts is in accordance with this firm and strong conviction, that the majority of people will accept ghosts at all. That the soul persists they are quite sure, and when it is declared to them that this soul has been seen they are not prepared to deny that it might be seen. They are in fact glad, because they welcome any evidence at all that tends to confirm their hope and belief of a survival after death. This sufficiently explains the wide acceptance of the idea by those who have never seen and never wished to see anything supernatural. The childishness of the ghosts when they appear, the absurdity of the circumstances under which they are seen weighs as nothing compared to this fact. It is expressive of a vital truth and as such is cherished. There is no difficulty in perceiving this, in understanding why all the absurdities have not killed the idea. To each believer the absurdities are extrinsic, the truth intrinsic.

‘The question of those who declare they see ghosts, hear prophecies, and receive revelations is another matter. No one can prove or can disprove them. A man declares he saw a spirit; he is sincere, but he cannot prove to you he saw anything but a phantom of his brain. You cannot prove to him he did not see a “something” which might be the spirit of some one dead.

‘A man comes to you with a revelation or a vision; it is the same. For he is sure he heard and saw, but the certainty remains with him alone. He cannot pass it on to you. Such things remain, as far as direct proof or disproof can go, for ever in the misty region of uncertainty.

‘There are only two things that can ever entirely destroy the belief: one is a disbelief in any immortality at all, a decadence, a materialism which denies aught but the body. The second is a clearer, wider, saner concept of our immortality. Whoever holds this disbelief or this conception laughs at ghosts, and in the stories sees the childishness. Both these are rare. Yet those who have understood the Buddhist view of life and death and immortality believe in none of these things. They reject ghosts because in their conception the after life is so much saner, more beautiful, more wide than any theory of ghosts can give. They reject dreams and visions and revelations because they are sure that all we need to know, all we can conceivably understand about our souls, about our righteousness, about the everlasting verities is near enough and clear enough to be seen without any supernatural aid. True religion is the real science, and like all knowledge that is sure is built up from below. There are those who say that all religions are built on ghosts and dreams and visions, but that is not so. Only Semitic faiths are so built even in theory — every Eastern faith is a science; expressed, no doubt, in hyperbole, extravagance, with many accretions of the marvellous added to the religion, nevertheless a science. Remember what the Buddha said, that whoever should claim to have seen visions or revelations, to have heard voices or dreamed dreams, should be expelled from out his monasteries.

‘And who can doubt which is the way to build a faith that is true, that will last, that will expand to suit man’s rising needs? How far did science go when it held to the Mosaic account of the Creation? Yet that account may be in essence true.

‘Suppose you think that truth can only come by revelation, by dream and vision, prophecy and other supernatural means, how can you stand on firm ground? Most dreams, most visions, most prophecies are loathsome things. What do the generality of ghosts do? They behave like lunatics aimlessly. They haunt graveyards and ruins, they give us a high ideal surely of what we will be after death. Most dreams are horrors, formless nightmares from which we wake with gladness to reality and light. Most prophecies are but denunciations of your enemy. You cannot injure him, for he is too strong for you, so you attempt to frighten him with tales of revenge to come. It is the refuge of those who have neither strength nor reason. These are the antipodes of truth.

‘Ghosts and all that pertain to them are the very cult of fear — they are a horror; truth is the cult of hope.

‘Who in all stories is the King of ghosts; whom do you invoke to bring them? It is the Devil, the Spirit of wickedness and evil, of death and of damnation. Have you seen any one gain happiness thereby? If they be untrue, only hallucination, then are they disease. If there be really ghosts then are they to be avoided more than any death. For they are the denial of all that men hope and live for, they are a warning and a terror, a devil’s brood.

‘But say that there are true visions, true spirits who arise, that there are those who really hear celestial voices, are you any better off? How do you know this truth? How can you tell the true from the false; what test will separate the true revelation from the hallucination? Most of them must be hallucination,

they are too stupid to be anything but that. All that man can do under these circumstances is to put his trust in some self-appointed authority, in some man or body of men. He must surrender his will and sense to them. And they, how can they determine? They cannot in fact have any criterion but their own theories of right and wrong. They must trust themselves and declare themselves the mouth-piece of God, the sifters of the true and false. There must be a Church, and all men must be in spiritual bondage to that Church or be outcasts. It claims authority, and yet it can never prove it has any right to any authority at all, has in it any truth. This Church must ally itself with worldly power, with Kings and Governments, to enforce an authority that would otherwise be rejected, that always is rejected when the secular authority ceases.

‘But the difficulty does not end there. A revelation must be given in words, and what are words but symbols? They can at best when new express but a little facet of the truth; the other facets are ignored. They are given for a time and place and people, but these all change. The newer times and peoples need another aspect of the truth. How can they get it? Is truth to be petrified in little morsels? Words are but signs and their sense varies with each person always, even at the time, while every year makes greater divergence. How can you be sure that you understand what the voice tried to say? The interpreter may be in fault. Who is to declare the real meaning? Are you to have new revelations or to be content with dead truths? Truth is a living thing and grows. If it be founded on revelation, how can it grow except by new revelation?

And if there be no new revelation you are confined within the narrow limits of an ancient saying.

‘Religion must stagnate and die, stifled by word and letter, or it must live by often repeated revelations, all incapable of proof. No living knowledge could progress like that. Science is not like that, it could not live in such a condition. It was attacked by dogma, stifled, declared contrary to truth, science that is the only true way of finding truth. And true religion is the science of the soul. It is built up from little things, it is susceptible of proof or disproof. It grows, and it is ready always to discard the false and narrow, to welcome the wider view. Science is so, despite the scientific men perhaps, who try to make themselves high priests; but they pass, and truth progresses because it is true.

‘That is the principle that Buddhism has always worked upon. It never says, “You must believe because *I* say so.” It says, “This is truth as far as we can see, and those who doubt let them test and try if it is truth or not.”

‘Build upward from below.

‘The great teachers of Buddhism in the past did so. They said, “We see things, and see thou too.” They said, “We think that we see parts of truth, but truth is infinite, and as the world grows it will see more; we lay the foundations only. All truth is welcome to us, truth that is proved and sure. Truth is the tree of life. Its roots are in the earth, and in the hearts of men, its branches rise towards heaven; and that they may grow ever higher, greener, more full of fruit, remember to keep the roots always watered with reality.”’

## CHAPTER VIII

### RAYS OF THE INFINITE LIGHT

THE year grew older and the power of the sun increased. That golden King looked down upon an uncontested realm and filled it with his glory. In the air was a flood of light and heat that fell upon the earth; and the children of the sun, the brown-eyed, brown-skinned people loved it. They went out in it at all hours, they rejoiced and laughed in it, they let it bathe them, filling them with its happiness and strength. But the son of the pale North sat through all the mid-day hours sheltered within his room. He feared the sun's touch, yet he loved to see its light. Without his window stood a tree with feathery leaves and scarlet blossoms, and the light came filtering through it in tiny golden shafts of light. In the afternoon the light came right into his chamber and made a sunny diaper of light and shade upon the matted floor.

He lay and watched it spread further and further, and he wondered to see the beauty it brought into the bareness of the chamber.

The sun is the source of light and heat, and without it we should have no life. It draws the waters of the seas into the heavens and gives them to the land. All power comes, or has come, from it. The wood we burn has gained its heat from heaven and keeps it for a while. The protoplasm in the plant vibrates to the

same energy. Life is not in it but in the sun that gives it. Sun worshippers have recognised this, and they have used him as the symbol of the science of all the life that is. It comes always from without as does the sunlight.

The sunlight comes upon us in a flood, but that great tide is made of tiny beams, and in each beam lie all the properties of the whole; visible and invisible rays they all are there. Each little beam that filters through the leaves is a completeness in itself, an entity, a personality. Yet when incarnated in a leaf its expression differs from all the rest.

We are such beams from the eternal sun. We come straight from the source of life and consciousness, a beam bound up with others but distinct, manifest in flesh.

The sunshine fell upon the lamp hung low beside the window. The cut glass crystals underneath it broke the golden stream into many colours. They passed a shining band across the shadow and fell upon the wall. He traced it with his finger, and he said: 'This is the symbol of life as the East has always seen it; not as a substance, shadowy, filmy, still a substance placed within our bodies, but as a beam and a force, made up of many forces.

'This is the symbol that I sought. The heavens have given me what I could not find. This light that comes down from the sun is the allegory of the life that comes from God. It comes upon us from above, and in it are many forms, as in the light are many rays.'

// He laid his finger on the red ray. 'Here,' he said, 'is the first we see, but there are rays beyond, dark

rays. These are, as it were, the blind forces that built up the earth, that made the crystals in the rocks, that hold the water drops together, that make the winds move to and fro. There is no light in them, no intelligence, only force and power. So God built the world with the dark rays before the higher life could come.'

And when the world was builded, when the seas were made, the mountains lifted up, the earth divided from the water, He added just another tiny ray, not dark this time, but with the faintest light of life. And it made protoplasm from the materials gathered for it. So rose the humbler forms of vegetable life. Little by little the ray grew brighter and the life increased. This ray it is that is the life. That is what makes the sap to rise and fall, the leaf to spread, the bud to open. Yet not this ray alone, but this added to all that went before. For alone it could do nothing. The dark rays made and keep the world, and to them light and life is added. And so life broadens. So the invisible merges into the visible, the brute forces into the unconscious life. As the forms in which life is manifested are made more and more perfect, so the life to be shown therein is increased.

Then came the further rays that lie beyond the visible. There came upon the world the first faint ray of consciousness, of conscious life, of will, of power to move and act, to do right and wrong. These put into the protoplasm the life that grew up into animals. The rays increased, and the increasing unconscious and conscious life built up little and by little the animal form to manifest itself in. Out of animals came man, and man rises ever. His consciousness, his conscience which is his knowledge of right and wrong, his will to



do that which he sees. That is the evolution of the entity of man, which is the compound of all the forces from the beginning — the brute forces, the unconscious life, the conscious life. He is a compound of them all, and they are all in the beam that is his life. They are all one, and yet they fall into three parts, with three moralities, three laws, three forms of righteousness.

First, the blind forces, gravity and heat, expansion and contraction, electricity and many another. They have their laws, which laws are their morality, their righteousness. They cannot disobey them. They never act but in one way, the way directed. Gravity cannot draw faster or slower, light cannot pass whither it would, the crystal forms ever in one fixed way. They have no life and they endure, but do not grow or change.

Then came the unconscious life of plants who have a right and wrong, for they may live and spread or else disappear. They may grow and become a fuller manifestation or they may cease to be. As they adapt themselves to the world about them, as they fortify themselves by strength and beauty and usefulness, so they have immortality. Yet it would seem they have no conscious life, only unconscious.

With the conscious life there came a conscience, a steady growing knowledge of right and wrong, a steady growing will to do that which is right, a steady growing control over the lower forces. That is our soul. From the first beginnings in the earliest years our souls have grown as our bodies have developed in one stream, and the life in them; and the soul that is added to the life has increased.

The knowledge of right and wrong which we recognise in animals has become ever more clear, the will to do that which we see proportionate to our knowledge grows with it, our power to enforce our will grows also. The lesser rays have found little by little their master. The soul rules. As yet his control is slight because his knowledge still is slight. Knowledge comes first, control later. So is man now a beam of life manifested in a body it has built.

And that is how the East sees the world.

How easy now is the belief in transmigration. The increasing life and soul has built itself up by slow degrees a form to show itself in. The imperfect beam showed in the animal, the higher in the man, still the same beam only with additions. It is an evolution of the soul manifested in an evolution of the body. And evolution acts both ways.

As the life of man has arisen from that of animals by the addition of a moral consciousness, so if in successive lives that consciousness, that soul be not cultivated and followed, we may fall back again. The higher ray may fade and the beam become again the same as that the beasts have. So the life of man has been in animals and may be so again.

That is the underlying faith of all the East, that is their view of life. Man's soul, his life is not a kernel made fresh at birth and which in death is liberated and banished from the world. It has existed always and has won its way upwards. It is not an inherent quality of certain forms of matter as science would seem to tell us, it is a force that comes from God and manifests itself in matter.

"We are the products of an evolution. Yes. Not

our bodies only but our souls. As our bodies grew fitter to incarnate the greater life, so the life was added from above. And our powers have grown, governed not by blind forces but by life direct from an Intelligence who gave them their work to do, told them how to progress. And such intelligence as we may have is not the product of unintelligence acting in unintelligent matter, but a ray from the Divine.

That is what the East believes and always has believed. It expressed it in its own dim way, but it understood always what it meant. The evolution of the scientific man which staggered the Churches of the West means only to the East that by great work and great research, through infinite weariness and trouble, the wise men of the West have learnt a little of what the East has always known. It is what the East believes, not only the Buddhistic East but all religions. It is the conception on which all are founded. It comes out clearly in them all whenever you go below the image to that which is within.

‘Surely,’ the man said to himself, ‘I have the key. I see as they do. I see at last the world as the East has always done as the incarnation of God, not of all God but of some rays from His infinite glory.’

He turned and through his window gazed upon the world without. He saw the fields clothed with green garments; he saw the palms in stately columns stand. He saw the flowing river, and the hills a dream in the far distance; he saw the living light that flooded all this world.

And looking thus it took a new meaning to him. It had been always beautiful, he had always felt his heart come to his lips in looking on it. Now it was

different; not less beautiful but more, not less happy but happier. For it had a soul. He felt in it the life of all the world, of all that has been, all that is and will be. It was the expression of the Will of God.

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For a long while he stayed so. Then he turned and threw the spectrum on the mat again.

‘Still,’ he said, ‘I have my symbol and it has meaning yet. I will follow it to the end.’

‘So far have we come, what of the rest? What of the future? This beam is finite. We pass into the last bright colour, and there are invisible rays and then an end. But the beam of life is infinite. Yet, as we progress, as we add ray to ray, so we come nearer to the whole. As Knowledge increases so does Will to will it, so does Power to do it. Until in the infinite future Knowledge and Will and Power are one.’

‘And again, we must not forget that we rise, not by rejecting the lower forces but by keeping them and adding to them. The Higher cannot exist alone. For the great white light consists of all the rays. Not of the brightest only, but of all, visible and invisible.’

‘The highest life is not a part but a whole, it does not ignore the world but includes it. The Truth is made up of all the truths.’

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‘How came the East to this conception? Did men work it out long ago, arguing back from effects to causes? They might do so. In no way can many phenomena of the life be explained except by some such theory of what life is. Perhaps the great thinkers, the simple minded of the simple East worked back in

some such manner. This must be partly true because only the clever minded see it quite so. Or was there in all of them instinctively a recognition that life is from without? This also must be true because not only to the thinker but to the peasant the faiths built on this conception appear true. It may be that there is in all the same instinctive understanding that comes with the life itself, but only the thinkers fully recognise it.

‘Both are true. Instinct has been tested against fact, to see if one contradicts the other. If the only way to explain facts is by the key of their instinct, then is the instinct true. But if the instinct be true, it must explain the facts of life. Does it do so? They say it does. Well I will try as best I can. I will take it into the life about me and see if it gives an explanation. In all essentials life here is the same as elsewhere in the world, East or West. Men are born and grow up, work and play, suffer and are happy, and at last die, just as do all men. All life is one, and whatever helps to explain life here, will help to explain it everywhere.

‘But I must remember this. It is but a symbol this of the light. It is a simile and must not be pushed too far. It may have truth, but at best can have but a side of truth. If it contains a little that will be all it can.

‘Western science to explain phenomena of forces uses a symbol it has invented, that of the ether. It does not know that there is ether, it does not understand how there could possibly be an ether, or how it could have properties. And yet it uses it as a symbol till it can see more clearly. Such is the symbol of the ray.’

## CHAPTER IX

### A WINDOW ON ETERNITY

It was the evening and he sat beside the river. Down the long reach the sunset made a glory. Gold faded into red, red into pink that throbbed with the last life of the dying day. Light clouds swam into sudden gorgeousness and glowed like fairy islands on an emerald sea. The flush spread across the sky till even the eastern mountains veiled themselves in colour.

And ever into the sunset's heart the river flowed. The cattle came down to the drinking-places and stood knee-deep gazing far away. The dust they had raised hung like a crimson pall upon the bank; for the winds were dead, stilled in day's agony.

Some children played and bathed and laughed. Their brown, wet bodies caught the glow and turned from bronze to gold. Their laughter thrilled in the still air.

Girls came and drew their household water. Like the cattle they waded into the stream, which made curved ripples round them, their shadows stretched far up.

They passed away; the sunset faded, the light was gone, and only a tender glow suffused the world. The river turned to steel.

A boy came out of the village gate and passed along the bank. He moved slowly, loiteringly, looking out

into the night. Sometimes he broke into a snatch of song suddenly stilled again. He sat down on a rock beside the river, but his back was turned to it. He looked back at the path on which he had come with bright, expectant eyes. Presently the watcher became aware that some one else was coming down the path. He heard a leaf rustle, a branch was put aside. The boy heard it too, and his attitude became tenser. He stretched forth his arms with a little unconscious gesture and withdrew them. The newcomer came along uncertainly. Somewhere the footsteps ceased, and in the strained stillness a soft breathing could be heard; then she moved on. And the boy rising listened, called a name and stepped forward.

A girl came out of the oleander bushes and they met.

He put his arm about her and drew her forward. For a moment they stood side by side and looked to where far off the last flames of the sunset burned; and then he took her hand. They moved along the river. They passed as in a dream, faces downturned; their fingers lightly held.

Yet they were not alone. With them there passed the two eternities, all the years that have ever been and all the years to come.

'I made her for thee,' said the Past, whispering into his ear. 'I made her for thee, shaping her through all my years that thou mightest love her. Have I done well? Is her cheek soft? Her eyes, are not they bright?'

The boy laughed and looked.

'Go to him,' said the Future in her ear. 'Go to thy husband. All my years that are to come are

empty of delight. It is for thee and thine to help to fill them. They need his strength, thy beauty.'

She listened and she drew nearer to his side.

The boy stopped and turned his face to hers, and in his eyes were thoughts he could not utter, those thoughts that have no words.

He leant against her and heart beat to heart.

The night bent down and listened, the moving branches stayed, a wandering wind caught on a palm and held its wings in stillness. The river spirit pressed his finger to his lips. They listened to the song of all the world. Love touched the heartstrings, and they trembled. From their trembling came the music to which all life is lived, the song of immortality.

He drew her and they passed slowly along the river brink and out of sight.

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Love? What is love? Let us consider it.

What was the boy before it came to him? He lived a narrow life within a very narrow world. He had his duties to himself, to find food and clothing and material things to keep himself alive and happy. He worked that he might gain, he sowed that he himself might reap. The rays of life that were in him brought him no other righteousness but this: 'Care for thyself; make thyself happy, strong, and free. The world is thine as far as thou canst make it so, to take, to use, to throw away. Remember thy future rests upon thyself alone. If thou art weak thou failest, if thou art brave and clever, success will come to thee. But remember there is a limit. To be too brave and die, what use were there in that? Death is the end. Keep it far



from thee. It is a fear, a barrier beyond which thou canst not see. Make the best of life, for it is very short and no one knows what is beyond. Thou art thyself a God unto thyself, to worship and to serve. There is one unailing test to apply to all things. Will it advantage thee? then it is good; if not, then it is evil.'

Such was he, was she, an hour ago before the village gate had closed behind them. True, they had heard of other duties then, heard but had not understood. The words had passed them, idle words that woke no response. Duty to wife and child, to village, to country, what were such things? They had not felt them. They were as strange as stories of light and colour to those who are born blind; and for the future, surely next week was far enough to look.

And now what has come to them? To their stream of life has been added the rose-red ray of love, and it has changed the whole world for them. Their lives are broader, deeper, stronger, their pulses move in other fashion. They have 'a mystery in their heads, and in their hearts a flame.' The old life is not altered, it is still there, the old righteousness still persists, is true. But there is an added life, and with it a righteousness that sometimes confirms, sometimes denies the one which went before. Each has still the duty to himself to keep alive, to be strong and happy, and well-doing, a duty felt all the more keenly because any failure would fall on two. The result of his own errors, his idleness, or foolishness he can bear easily; that now another should also suffer makes them more bitter, more to be avoided. For the sake of the wider self into which he is now drawn he must be now more

careful of the narrower self. He must work harder, suffer more, obtain more, exercise an even narrower selfishness than he did before. The present intensifies the past — and then denies it. He must remember self and also must forget. His pleasure was sweet to him, he may be called upon to give it up. He must affront suffering that before he would avoid. He may not run, because others cannot run with him. It may be that he must die that his family, his wife and child may live. To justify this righteousness which he must obey is given to him an immortality. If he should ask, 'Why should I sow? I cannot reap'; to him is answered, 'Yourself persisting in your sons will reap.' If he should ask, 'Why should I die? Why should I give myself to forgetfulness and death?' is answered, 'That your greater self may live.' Love has come down and drawn two units into one, and made that unit but a link in the long chain that reaches from the beginning to the end.

The life they had before stopped at their individuality. The greater life they have now is that of all the ages. 'Thy children shall endure, and as thou now and they after thee observe the righteousness that is given to thee and them, so shall they prosper. The children reap that which the parents sow.'

The life that was before, this life which is added to it comes from without. They are the unconscious life. We live because life is put into us, not because we wish to, or because we will to do so; our emotions that are our life come to us unconsciously, unbidden, and with them the righteousness proper to them. With life comes the desire to live, to protect the life that is in it, to cultivate it, to give it all it needs; when love is

added it brings with it the instinctive desire to protect the other members of the family, the knowledge that individual self must be subordinate to them. The wolf, the deer, the human parent suffer and die willingly, gladly for their young, that these latter may endure. They do not think it out, the righteousness comes unbidden. It is the law to which love is subordinate, within whose limits it moves.

The immortality that love gives is the continuance of the unconscious life, on which alone conscious life can be built. Our children inherit from us their bodies with all that they mean of good or evil. Their weakness or their strength, their beauty or their ugliness, their quick or languid passions are an inheritance. As we have done well to our bodies so will our children benefit; as we have done evil so will they suffer. As we have made our names of good or evil savour to the world so will our children's be. Wealth or poverty, honour or contumely, health or sickness, all the products and the results of our bodily life we have inherited; and modified by our actions we again transmit. But the Soul, the Will, the Conscience, which is the accumulated knowledge of good and evil, that is our Personality, that is ours always. The soul that is in our children is not our soul — as their body is — their life is — has not come from us. It is their own enduring possession. The expression of their Souls is limited by the capacity of the bodies we hand down: they may be good lamps that give clear light, they may be dull, imperfect ones. But the Soul that is in them is not ours. The Personality of the Soul is constant from the first faint ray of it. It grows or fades. It inherits from incarnation to incarnation the result of its previous existence:

the Will, the Consciousness, the Conscience, increase or fade again.

It is dependent on life for its manifestations; when later the rays of conscious life and will are added, when the Soul begins to grow, the conscious life attempts to understand the unconscious. It observes and notes the laws to which it is subordinate. It attempts to understand those laws, to co-ordinate them with other laws that knowledge may decide what restraint or help to give the unconscious desire. The Soul is Knowledge and Will. But power is of the unconscious life. The Soul could never exist alone; it has no power, it could do nothing; it is as a helmsman added to a full-powered ship to direct its course. The force which drives the ship is in the unconscious steam or winds. As life grows and becomes more complex, containing more forces, they act in different ways. The helmsman has to decide which in each case is the course to follow. But alone he could do nothing.

The perfect Beam of Light contains absolute Knowledge, absolute Will, absolute Power to do what Will dictates. But the Power belongs to the unconscious forces.

This life which lives through love though unconscious is divine. It has formed the basis on which religions have all been built. This Divinity of love is the first God, its laws are the first morality, children are the first Immortality.

To the Greeks and Romans who were the earliest gods, Zeus, Saturn, Aphrodite, Jupiter, Venus, Mars? Not so. The gods of hearth and home, of family, the Lares and Penates. They were the foundation, their recognition and their service were the base of all the

Grecian glory, all the Roman grandeur. What does it matter what you think about the heaven or earth compared with what you know of yourself and your life and that which proceeds from you?

Hinduism, Judaism, Shintoism are great faiths built on the same foundation. What immortality knew Abraham or Isaac, save of children? What morality save that which love brings? The Hindu who dies without a son goes to limbo, to that hell which is oblivion and forgetfulness. And Shintoism, greatest of all the family cults whose expression is Bushido, whose justification lies upon Manchurian battlefields. But expressed or unexpressed it is the beginning on which all faith is built. The life comes first, the soul later; so far as we may see the soul's rays come always after those of life, are superposed upon them. Therefore must the religion of life come before that of soul. It is its base, its safety and its sanity. One love springs from another.

This is the Hinduism that Buddhism was built upon twenty-five centuries ago. It existed then a pure and simple faith, a recognition of the divinity of life and love, of the morality that is their law, of the desirableness of children.

Now think of it another way. How are our bodies built but by attraction of particle to particle making one whole? The little corpuscles of the blood have life of their own, they live, they move, they act, but they are one with the greater life of the whole. So is it in continuing sequence, in an increasing purpose. There comes from heaven a greater and a greater force that draws particles into greater wholes. The individual man and woman have a narrow present and

a swift-coming end. But love comes like an electric force making them magnets each to each, drawing them into one whole, giving them all the future. Units are sand, love makes of them a never-ending strand. So also with the later loves. A later force draws families into communities, communities into nations, and nations into humanity. Peoples and nations are not built from individuals but from families. Can you make ropes of sand? Well some have tried, but where have they succeeded?

It is an old saying through all the world that Love is what makes the world, what gives it Immortality, that God is love. Now with this symbol of the beam we can see how in reality this must be so. Life and soul are increasing rays that attract and bind the lower entities into ever greater forms. If they should cease, then should we fall apart and become as the formless ooze again. We grow by being increasing aggregates. We rise as pyramids rise from below; and the higher the pinnacle the firmer and deeper must be the base.

Whatever more the Soul may have to give us it cannot deny the life, the love that builds the body. Those who would do so are like the man who climbed a tree and then in order to climb higher, vexed at the branch that seemed to stop his upward flight, cut it away to render himself free to soar into the heavens. He fell and learned too late that the tree held him up, not down.

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What a wonderful thing is love. It is the base not only of all religions, but of all happiness, all beauty.

Take love from out the world and search to find

what has become of Literature and Art and Music? They may contain other things as well, but at the base is love. All higher emotions of our life rise from it, the love that gathers man and woman into one organism, that weaves the threads of families into the ropes of nations. In it are all the glories and truth of sacrifice and duty, of honour and of courage. Even the soul finds alone in love an image to express its meaning.

We live and love because our parents did so. The world exists because it loved. And love it is that holds the secret of immortality. It is love's hand that opened first a window on eternity.

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The night was fully come. The heavens were dark yet full of stars, and from them fell a lustre that filled all space. Along the banks were lit fires that glowed and sent red trails across the water. The earth was not dead but sleeping, and breathed lightly in her sleep.

There was a movement down below. The lovers came slowly passing home. They moved in unison, their hands hung idly but their shoulders touched. Love held them in a dream. They were in a new world full of new thoughts, new hopes, new strength, new weakness. They knew not why. Suddenly it had come, unheralded, unearned, a free gift of heaven.

They love, and because they love the centuries yet unborn shall know them. They will inherit.

They disappeared and a minute later the gateway clanged.

Adown the river came a boat soft sliding on the flood. A light burned in her bows and burned again within the ebon water; and a voice gave forth a love-song to the night.

The music rose and fell, passionate, sweet and true. It thrilled from the heart. The unseen singer sang the song of all the worlds, the Song of Songs. It filled the night with music.

The stream flowed on and bore the boat and singer out of sight.

Again a silence.

And far away a monastery gong rang silver sweet across the night.



## CHAPTER X

### ONE TIME, ONE TRUTH

IT was the middle of the hot weather.

The crops were reaped, the fields lay bare and brown and desolate. A hot wind blew that burnt the life from blade and leaf, that stripped the trees and drove the dead, brown leaves in whirlwinds to and fro. The streams were all dried up and even the great river shrank between broad banks of sand. A grey haze filled the air and hid the distance. Day after day, the sun rose up a rayless crimson ball, climbed higher and became a blazing, pitiless tyrant in the cloudless heavens, and sunk again into the haze. All nature gasped and fainted and had rest. Then was the time of leisure and of festival. There was no field work, waiting till the showers came. So the people gathered to the great pagodas and made fairs and feasts. They slept by day but were awake through the long hot nights.

Then was the Burmese New Year. It and the Christians' Easter came at nearly the same time, and in the Burmese tradition of the festival there is a strange likeness to that of the Western story. For there the Great Spirit leaves his Heaven and comes down to the earth for three days and three nights, and then ascends again. It were an interesting matter to compare the two stories. But this is a book of Buddhism, and the Burmese New Year is local and not

concerned with Buddhist teaching. It is no doubt connected with the change of the seasons, the spring of the new agricultural year. For then may the earliest showers be looked for. And it was a custom in the Burmese times for girls to come and throw water on the bachelors, and make them pay a fine — for remaining bachelors, no doubt. It was a girls' festival as in Europe when the maids kept May Day. Now it has died away, the innocent fun and merriment. They say that we have killed it by our rule.

But the pagoda festivals remain more popular than ever, and there are many marriages for there is leisure now, and the reaped crops have brought in money, and in the future comes the Buddhist Lent when no one may wed.

The little village down below the monastery was gay and happy; for messengers had gone abroad to all the neighbourhood and told how the headman's daughter was to be married, and had brought the tiny parcels of green tea wrapped in a leaf which are the invitations. There was rumour of great preparations, of actors brought from Mandalay, of well-known singers, of jugglers famed through all the countryside. Festival sheds of mats and palm leaves had been built, and rice was boiling in great pots, and fruit stood in fragrant pyramids. In the cool early morning all the lanes were full of folk who came to laugh and to make merry at the wedding, and the village folk went out to meet the visitors and welcome them. They told them tales, how the bridegroom had been caught the night before and held to ransom. It is an old custom for the village boys to band themselves together in a company. They have a captain and they have rules. They must

be faithful to their company and help their companions in all ways. But when one of them marries he ceases to belong to the company; for he is about to enter into another and a wider life. He is to marry, to lose his individuality in the organism of the family. He is to enter into the village life, to be a 'household.' His time of freedom and of carelessness is past, of responsibility and work is come. He is absorbed into a greater whole. He is a deserter and a traitor to his fellows.

Therefore they lay in wait for him and caught him as he went home at night, and taking him without the village gate they tried him and found him guilty. With mock ceremony was he condemned to be expelled from out their ranks and pay a fine wherewith his comrades might drown their sorrow at his desertion. Then with laugh and song, to the light of torches, they took him home in long procession. It is a jest maybe, and yet it has its meaning. For marriage is a real change. And it is not without good that this change should be impressed on him who is about to make it; that he should know and realise that he has entered into a new phase of life.

With the girl there is no such ceremony. She belongs always to her family, and the change for her though not less real, is not so much from individualism to community as from one family to another. All day the festival went on, and in the late afternoon the young folk were married.

There was a signal and the music ceased, and from out of an inner room the boy came forth and sat upon a mat prepared for him. The girl was brought and placed beside him and together shy, and yet glad, they faced the company. And now, how were they to be

married? Who was to tie the knot that fastened the strands of their lives into one cord? What was to mark the change? In law nothing more is necessary than that they should eat together before witnesses and declare themselves as man and wife. A word, a gesture would suffice in law. And yet, can it be good to pass thus from one state to another without solemnity and thought? Can it be that marriage, which is the foundation stone on which is built all life, should be as unregarded as the buying of a farm? Religion, all is built on it, and has religion then no part in it? Within the monastery are many monks, will none come down to sanctify this union? It seemed as if their duty called to them. That very morning had they not come in long procession to receive the presents that the parents gave, thanksgiving offerings for the happiness that was come to the children? Gave they no return?

But no. Upon their hill they sat apart and thought far other thoughts. Marriage was no affair of theirs, they could not come. Sometimes a village elder joins the hands, sometimes the bride's father, and sometimes another.

Silently one came from out the press and stood before the people, then he turned and sat him down before the boy and girl. There could not be a greater contrast than he made to all surrounding him. His face was long and lean and very dark amidst a throng of round, brown, merry faces. His was the face of those peoples whose memories are very long, who are very old, full of retrospection, of thought, of finesse, of dream. Theirs were simple as a child's. His garb was white, but bride and bridegroom, parents and guests were clad in gayest colours. This was a Burmese marriage

in a Burmese village and the priest was Indian. A marriage among Buddhists firmly holding to their faith — and he who married them a Brahmin.

It was the strangest contrast, one more strange could hardly be imagined. For what had they in common, the Hindu with the Burman, the Brahmin with the Buddhist? Were they not contradictions of each other in race, in custom, aspiration and in faiths?

Such the West thinks, the East knows better.

He sat before the boy and girl and took their hands in his and joined them. He took a cup and poured therefrom water over the joined hands. He took a thread and bound the two together; then loosening their hands he bid them eat out of the same dish.

They were made one, and in few words he told them what it all meant.

They were made one, no longer man and woman but one entity. They complemented each the other, strength fitted into weakness, the one succeeded where the other failed. They had been parts imperfect, they were now one whole. And from that unit there would draw out an immortality. The years would know not one, nor other, but the two together. They shared this world's life henceforth and for ever.

There was a deep silence. Perhaps by him and her the words were hardly heard, came dimly through the mist of their emotions to their consciousness. But they would remember later, and in the troubles that would arise, — must arise, a truth would grow from them.

But through the elder folk who listened ran a thrill of recognition. They knew, they *knew*. A woman sobbed, and so there came an end.

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The sun set, a red globe behind the palms, and with the dusk there came a peace. The strain of day was over, the heat, the light, the fever passed away. A golden moon rose up behind the mountains. It made a magic on the world, a charm of silence, and the tired earth lay in waking dreams of rest.

‘My friend,’ the old monk answered, ‘let us recall the world that was, the world to which came the Great Teacher; let us remember the life he lived and what he taught. There — in these lie the answers to your questions.

‘He was a prince, he was learned in all the science of those days, he was a good soldier, a good ruler; he tried in all things to do as well as possible. He was married and he had children. In all these matters he followed the knowledge and understanding of those days, he accepted the religion which was based on the family and civic virtues and had its justification in children and in nation. They were great and happy peoples in those days in Upper India. It was there that arose the beginnings of all knowledge and of all religion. They were simple peoples and saw things clearly. Did the Great Teacher in his after years when he had found the Light ever condemn all that he had learnt, all that he had done? Did he say men should not be princes, rulers, soldiers, that they should not make money, or seek learning? Did he speak against marriage or the reward of children?

‘He denied none of these things, for he knew that in them was truth. What he sought for and he found was a further truth, something added to those early truths, a later truth. That was what he sought and found and taught. The early truths are true, but

they alone are insufficient. As man grows in soul, that soul requires its truths as his unconscious life has required theirs. And the soul's truth must be sought. It does not come instinctively as do the earlier truths.

'It is this later truth that is called the faith of Buddha. It is that we teach, we practise; for we are his monks, his followers from afar.

— 'But not he nor we deny the earlier truths. Can a pagoda spire deny its base? We know our truth is true because it rests on the broad base of other lower truths. We never forget that this is so. The statesman, merchant, soldier, farmer, are as necessary to the world as we are. The truths that come in family and in national life are true as ours are. Love's Immortality, that broad stream of life that passes from for ever to for ever, is the stream on which our Immortality floats down. Never believe that we think that because we have a truth we think we have all truth. Never believe that we think that one truth is higher or more essential than another. To the pagoda every brick is equally a necessity. Truth is made up of all the myriad truths of life.

— 'Why should we mind because the people go to Hindu priests to marry them? In the Buddha's time was Hinduism. Did he oppose it, did he wish himself to have the marrying of people? The Hinduism of to-day is not perhaps that of two thousand five hundred years ago, still it is founded on the same truths, it teaches the same Immortality. It is the science of the unconscious life, of the body and its virtues. Marriage belongs to it, is its sacrament. In olden days maybe, before you English came, marriages were made by elders in the villages. That was enough

then. The feeling of the people recognised it as more than a mere contract, an agreement and enforced it. But now the new leaven you have brought has disturbed all things. The sacredness of custom has been injured. Because there was no sanction of religion our boys and girls began to think marriage was but a partnership as between two men, and had no other law or consequence but that. Could anything be more terrible? Can you wonder the older people feared for the future, sought some way to impress upon their children what marriage was, the forging of a link in an eternity, the foundation on which rests all righteousness, the beginning of knowledge.

‘That truth is in their keeping not in ours. For we think this. Truth is infinite, man is very finite. No man can show more than one facet of the truth. He will do well if he can keep that facet clear. No man can do more. No man can blow both hot and cold. We have one truth and no man will deny but that we keep it. The other truths let others keep.

‘There is a faith that is based on love and children. With that faith we have no quarrel, we are sure that it has truth.

‘Why should we care if the people go to the priests of that ancient faith to marry them?

‘A man can do but one thing well. Does the soldier grieve, does he think less of his truths, his bravery, self-denial, self-restraint, obedience, love of his country, because all men are not soldiers, because there are also physicians? Does the physician interfere when war has come? Does the merchant say: “In the wisdom of buying and selling lies all truth”? When the enemy threatens we go to the soldier, when we are sick to the



physician, when we want food to the farmer and the fisherman, when we want justice to the judge.

‘Our truths are not concerned with marriage and with children. We stand aloof.

‘But think you that we do not know?’

He paused, in his dim eyes there came a light.

‘I too was young. I too have loved. I felt the blood run hot within my veins. I had a wife and children. Do you think I do not know these things are true?’

‘My wife is dead, my children are grown up. The light of love is turned from me and I see other lights. My earthly eyes are very dim. But I know the sun still shines, that men are young, that love is true. If it were not, then nothing could be true. Were that not light there could be no light at all. Did that sun fade, then were all the world dark and dead. All light is from the sun.’

He ceased, and through the silence of the night came softly floating up the music of the players. They talked, they sang, and every now and then murmurs of laughter and of pleasure rose from the crowded listeners. Life was good, and love was true, and Truth is of all the truths. There is a time to laugh, a time to weep, a time to kill, a time to save alive. To each man one truth at one time, truth upon truth, and in eternity the Truth.

One question more he asked.

‘Do you not fear that if your people take to Brahmin priests to marry them they may in time go to them for other matters and forget you?’

The old monk shook his head. ‘Is the physician’s truth less true and less acknowledged because men do

not go to him to help them till their fields or weave their cloth or defend their homes? Would it make his truth greater if he were to attempt to meddle with everything? It would but bring derision on him and scorn. For now two thousand and five hundred years have we kept our truth. Are we less honoured because we have not tried to make ourselves rulers and arbiters in all affairs of men?

‘Where Buddhism has fallen into disrepute what has been the reason? Always the same, because its monks tried to be all things to all men and so became nothing to any one, even to themselves.

‘But where they have kept their truth they have reaped honour and their truth has lived.’

The man knew that this was true. Nothing could be more true than this. To acknowledge all truths, to keep one; no man can do more, and it is given to very few to do as much.

The monk rose, yet ere he went he raised his hand and pointed. ‘We do not forget,’ he said. ‘We have remembrance of that first immortality on which ours lives.’

He passed away and the man looked silently remembering. A giant post rose long, slender, and straight, and on its summit raised above the palms a great bird glittered. The moonlight trembled on the gold and silver of his feathers till he seemed almost a living creature poised against the night.

All night along the river banks the feeding shel-drakes cry, mate unto mate, across the dark. ‘Chakwi where art thou?’ and her answer ‘Chakwa I come.’

All day they sit together side by side, or fly in pairs along the river’s edge. Life never parts them and to

death they go together. When one dies then the other follows. If you kill one then must you shoot the other too from very pity, for it will not leave its partner.

Through all the East they are the emblem and the symbol of married love.

And so by every monastery you see the post, the bird upon its summit and the streamers that the winds blow to and fro.

One love rests on another, one immortality upon another. Though man can follow but one at one time, he should remember all.

## CHAPTER XI

### LIFE THAT GROWS EVER WIDER

So they were married and in a little house beside the palms they began their new life, they began to learn the first lesson of their personality. In that organism which is the family they found that each had duties, virtues, rights, and weaknesses. They were as eye and ear, they were as head and body. But which in each case directed and which acted depended on the circumstance. Were it a village matter wherein his nature and his work gave him aptitude and strength he acted — for them both. Were it a household matter she acted, or she bade him act for both. Sometimes he was the brain and sometimes she. Sometimes he was the hand and sometimes she. They were not enemies, competitors, rivals striving for supremacy. Does the eye despise the hand because it cannot see? Does the hand contemn the eye because it cannot strike? Each had its duty, and if to the outer world of village and government he represented both, to that inner world of the household god it was she who spoke for both. She was the priestess there. Upon the niche she placed the flowers and leaves that the god of love, of home, of children might never forget them. That was her cult, her knowledge, her religion, for both of them. For the relationship of man and woman in marriage differs nowhere and at no time. They are one unit. The circumstances of life may call for

varied activities in that unit, may to the careless observer sometimes make the husband, sometimes the wife the more important, but in fact it is never so. The relationship is constant, never varied in essentials; savage or decadent it is always the same. It is the relationship of heart and brain. Whether a man earns his living by digging in the earth or by writing at a desk the relationship of heart and brain do not vary. And whether the family be savage or civilised the essential relationship of man and woman does not change. They are not a mechanical mixture but a chemical fusion.

And what they learn is this. No matter how strong the man be, how able, how active, he alone can never be complete. However beautiful the woman, full of all womanly graces and virtues, she too can never be complete. The better, stronger each may be, the more completely does each realise that a personality is but a part. This 'I' we are so proud of, this 'I' which seems to us so essential, so full of potentialities, has in fact alone no potentiality at all. It can but show a few of the infinite possibilities, it can but manifest one ray of an infinite spectrum. And this 'I' which we think has endured and will endure, nay must endure for ever, can of itself remain but a very short time. It is dependent on its fusion with another 'I' for its continuance. It is not man that lives, it is not woman that persists in children, it is the organism which is made up of both. This is the beginning of that essential truth that lies below the Buddhist view of the universe that the unit is not a man, a woman, a family, a nation, a world; not matter, life, or soul; it is the Universe, it is Infinity. All the innumerable

'I's' of every form of life are but fractions of that Unit and must be joined to make One.

So begins the lesson that we can read in life. Man the individual, woman the individual, what can they effect? At best so little it can hardly be perceived. How long their life? A few years in infinity. But joined and their potentiality is not merely doubled, far more than that; and their seed endures. The 'I' can only be continued by being merged in 'we.'

So it continues. The household, man and wife, how slight, how frail, an accident may end them and their children. But with their marriage they are drawn into the wider current of the village life.

It was not always so with men. At first in the far days when men emerged slowly from the lower forms the family alone obtained. But as men grew there came from heaven another force, another love. As the first love drew man and woman into one and made the family, so the second love drew families together into communities. It comes from heaven, it is another ray. Think you that it is from within, that men reason themselves together? No more does a man reason himself into love of a woman, than the family reasons itself into that feeling of community with its neighbours, of identity with them that makes the village. It is a force that comes when men are fit to manifest it; it makes magnets of the lesser parts and draws them into a greater. It is the analogy of the love of men and women. It is as great, as true, as independent of all thought.

And like the earlier love it brings with it a righteousness that is its law, and as its justification it offers an extended vision towards eternity.

What are its laws? What are men's duties to their village? As a man feels towards his family, so does the family to the community? A father or mother will suffer and will die to save their children willingly, gladly, if necessity arise; the family will suffer and will die to save the village. Because they think it right? Not so; because the love that has come to them makes them do so, whispers in their ear, 'You must, you *must*; it is my law, my righteousness.'

And for justification of this law, this righteousness, there is another stronger, wider Immortality. What a man does for his children is repaid not to him but them, what is done for a community is paid to the community. Not to the little 'I' but the greater 'I.' A man may not see or understand, but that is what love does and says. And if we cannot see or understand how a man profit should he and his family perish for his community, it is because we do not understand what life is. We think of it as an unit — 'I' am 'I,' and 'I' exist alone for ever. But all the loves, all these forces that come to us direct from the immensity, say No! Life is a stream. The unit is Infinity. And the 'I' can persist only by merging itself ever into greater 'I's.'

Men believe it, because they obey what love tells them; they are sure its laws are right, although they know not why and cannot understand the justification.

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'We wonder,' they told him, 'often at two things in you. It seems to us that you have so little of that family affection that is so strong in us. You come out here so far from your own people, from your parents and all your kinsfolk, from your village, your town.

You leave them all behind, you do not care; even you are glad. We could not do that. Our hearts are one with our people, our kin; we would do anything to help them. And our bodies are one with the trees, the streams, the fields whose fruits have nourished us and made our limbs. We love our village, and its customs, its ways, for they are ourselves. When we go away, as we have to go often to the lower country to the rich fields there, we are never happy till we return. A man hopes always that he will come back soon, dreams of it; he feels as if there were a cord that drew him. He thinks that nowhere in the world does the sun shine as it does in his home, nowhere are the palms so high, the flowers so sweet; nowhere are there men and girls like those who live within its boundaries. If he inherit but a patch of land too small to live on, too small even to let sometimes, he will not sell it. The field is his, is part of him. We do not live alone as you do, our life is part of that life that is in all things in our homes. And if in a far country we meet a fellow-villager he is our brother, though no kindred blood be in his veins.

‘But you, how different is it! You leave all that is yours and go away to a far country, and you live alone where everything is strange to you. You live within yourselves. Your family is all forgotten. You have no home, no village, no community. You marry sometimes and after a time your wife goes home. Your children grow from childhood and you do not know them. It seems to us terrible. You are like fish, like stones. You do not understand so many things. Our family life, our village life is as strange to you as if you had been made, not born. You talk and



say that they are good and should be preserved, and then you do your best to destroy both. You move every one of us that enters your service far away from all he knows, for fear, you say, that he may show favour to his kin; you break up our villages and try to alter all the organism that keeps them alive. We are sure that you do not know and do not feel as we do. You lack much that we have.

‘Yet you have one thing that we have not got. We have been drawn into families and into small communities, but the force that makes communities into a nation has not yet come to us except in very slight degree. We had our own Kings, our own Government, but they were weak. The people never stood about them solidly, never had much pride in them, never took much notice of them. We never felt that we were all one. And as the energy to draw us together was almost wanting, so the righteousness it brings with it never entered into us. That strong and fervent love, which is patriotism, which makes a man a great King, a wise master, a brave soldier, an upright judge never came into our hearts. So our officials were weak, they had not that steadfastness that comes of love of country. Each man was for himself, his family, his village. He thought of them and worked for them, but had no wider thought. For nation he cared little, for Government even less. True, it might punish or dismiss him, but as long as he avoided that he felt himself free. If he received an order he obeyed it or not just as he thought most convenient and safe. He would sacrifice himself even to the death for family or village, but not for Government. They were master and servant, that was all. With your people it is different. It is not only

that when you get an order you obey it, though it come from so very far away — that is wonderful enough to us — but you obey it willingly. You act as if it was something you wanted to do yourself, something you thought of in yourself for your own advantage. You understand not only what the order says but what it means, almost as if you yourself had said it. You are not servants who obey orders, you are as the hand or foot that acts as the brain designs. You live here widely separated, many thousand miles from your small island, but yet you are not divided from it. You are all held together by nerves in the invisible air that make you one. Therefore your Government is you, not your master, your teacher, your commander, but yourself. You feel as we do about our family and our village, that it is ourselves. That is what we notice and wonder at in you. When we see two or three Englishmen alone governing a great district, you appear to us not individuals but tiny finger-tips of a great living thing whose heart and brain are far away. Yet if the finger-tip be touched the whole responds. And what one of you does that is the act of the whole. Therefore you are strong and we are weak. You will suffer and die for your Government gladly because it is yourself, but our officials ran away. You will not do what will bring dishonour to your Government because it brings dishonour to yourself. You must surely feel that one life runs in all of you. And when you die your soul will live still in that great current which is the nation's life.'

'Can you not learn to do what we do; can you not cultivate that sense of duty to the nation and the Government you say we have?' he asked.

An old official laughed.

‘Does one learn such things? Does the boy learn to love the girl who is to be his wife? Love comes to him from heaven and draws the two together. Does he learn from books or teachers to love his village, his fields, his neighbours? are such things of the brain or memory? No, it is a vibration in his blood. It is another love that comes to him and draws him to them, makes his heart beat to them. We have two loves; we have them stronger than you have, they come to us in fuller measure. But the third has not yet come. We know and feel the deficiency. We see what difference it makes: how you are strong because you are one, and we are weak because we are many; how you have a righteousness we have not got because the energy of which it is the law has not yet fallen on us. You think we do not know and feel it, but we do. Some day it will come to us too.’

And the man thinking over what he saw and heard tried to put it clearly to himself like this:

‘It is the symbol of the rainbow still.

— ‘As the life of the plant was built by the addition of another ray of energy to those which built the crystal, as the animal life was formed by addition of consciousness and volition to the forces which were in the plant, as man the individual was given a brighter ray of consciousness and freewill; so he is compounded into families, communities, and states by the addition of still further forces which bind the component parts together.

‘It is an evolution ever into higher forms, ever into a higher, wider life, a broader consciousness, a more extended necessity for freewill and choice. The crystal

and the drop of water have no consciousness and no freewill. The forces that form them have laws which cannot be broken, which have no exceptions. They cannot disobey, their righteousness is fixed for them.

‘The trees and plants and grasses have life, they have perhaps a consciousness and a volition though of the very slightest kind. They may within very narrow limits obey or disobey. Therefore they are not unchangeable as is the crystal or the water. They live and die, they flower or they fade; they have descendants or they have none according as they obey within the very narrow limits allowed them.

‘The animals and birds have a little more life, a little more of choice of evil and of good, and so man has slowly evolved rising from the beast, every new ray of power bringing with it laws to be obeyed, or to be disobeyed, the limits within which disobedience is possible ever widening, his possibility of rise or fall ever increasing. And so it is when he is gathered into the higher organisms. Every new ray that is added to his sum of life draws him into more and more complex forms, till he becomes a state. Sometimes perhaps it will draw states into a great whole called humanity.

‘Thus his life-history is of the increase of the rays that form it, the rays that come from heaven; his physical history is of a rise to ever more complicated forms wherein to manifest the higher life; his ethical history is of the new forms of righteousness that come to him, of his power of choice, of his ability to choose rightly, of his will to do that which he chooses. He becomes more and more the master of his destiny as he is drawn into higher organisms and realises that

families, communities, nations are not aggregates of individuals, but complete organisms with their own laws of life, of growth, of righteousness. Men are the blood-corpuses in the nation's blood.

'The love that draws men into nations is a new love, a new ray that comes and makes the communities magnets to each other, that makes them into one flesh. It has a righteousness like the other loves. It makes a man as ashamed to fail his country as to fail his family, because it is himself, his wider self. Instinctively he feels it, and he dies willingly and gladly to help his country. This righteousness like every other has its Immortality. The nation lives, endures, is strong and glorious. He dies, but it lives on and he in it. This bodily manifestation disappears but the life continues in other manifestations. His identity goes not to a heaven or hell afar, but lives and reaps what it has sown. The wind that was his life, blows and shakes the world.

'It fades and disappears, and nations fall back into that chaos of men which we call individuals. No nation has endured. They have their lives and live and die like men. They fail from the roots up; they fail because their bases crumble. Their history is always the same. The family dies, then the community, last of all the nation. The pyramid becomes top-heavy, the individual bricks of which it is built crumble. Nations are made of communities and they of families; these last are based upon the soil.

'If it be true that our family instinct is departing from us, that we are learning to consider ourselves as individuals bound into a state, then is the end not far. So fell Rome, so has fallen every state.

‘But the force endures. It builds again, beginning at the beginning, taking the units, the individuals, and crystallising them again into new forms. Nations live and die as men do, but always the stream comes from the Power House to manifest itself anew. And every new manifestation is a greater than the last.’

## CHAPTER XII

### DAVID

It was the festival of the end of Buddhist Lent.

For three months there had been the time of fasting, of prayer and thoughtfulness. In these months there had been no festivals, no songs, nor music in the villages, no making of love, no giving nor taking in marriage. For three months the heavy, enervating wind from the south had blown, and the skies had lowered, and the lights had faded. But now was come the change. Blue skies, so blue, so blue and deep and full of glory that the eyes ached to look, and there were lucent shadows alive with the shimmer of reflected lights, and at night a moon of gold, set in a velvet firmament. It was the festival of joy, and all the world made merry. In the fronts of the houses were myriads of tiny lamps arranged in all manner of designs, lines and circles, loops and roses, ships and monasteries. From the trees hung paper lanterns, like big glowing fruits, and on the hill-tops all the pagodas were ringed with glittering lights. The air was still and soft, and full of scents. The streets were alive with people. Every one was out, dressed in gay silks, moving to and fro, laughing and talking. They stopped at little wayside stalls to buy their fairings, they joined their friends till from twos and threes they were grown into little parties. There were men and

women, boys and girls, and little children, and then they moved away slowly to the north towards the bluff whereon the great pagoda stood.

There was the gayest sight of all. The hill-top had been levelled and paved with stone, and on it was built a tall pagoda. Everywhere there were lights: upon the winding stairways of the hill that led to it, around the platform and on the pile itself, ring after ring of lights. And the crowd moved to and fro. They stopped sometimes, a woman lit a candle or made a little prayer — of happiness, no doubt, for all were happy. Then they moved on again. A singer out of sight among the trees sang to the night.

‘Surely,’ the observer thought, ‘they are a happy people, and surely their faith must be a happy one. It does not make them weak, but makes them strong; it does not make them fear, but makes them hope. This is their holy place, and all about are statues of their Teacher. They do not fear to look at him and smile; he does not make them think of sin but righteousness, not of the dark but of the light; of life, not suffering and death. They come to show that they are glad.’

He sat and watched them from the shadow. The colour and the movement and the joy made his pulses move. The great moon made silver glories on the hills.

They came and went before him as he sat unseen beside the giant lions, the people gay in silks and muslins, and the monks in sober garb. The latter passed silently with steps of dignity. Yet they were happy too.

Then suddenly it seemed to him that a note jarred, the colour seemed dimmer, there was a discord in the



harmony, something was strange, untrue, unreal. He wondered what, and looking up he saw a man pause near him. It was a monk. His robe was the same the monks all wear — the yellow garment thrown across leaving one shoulder bare, the shaven head was bare, the feet unsandalled. Nothing in dress or manner showed a difference from the many monks who paced the platform. Yet he was not as they were. There was a subtle difference.

And of a sudden he perceived the monk was not a Burman. He was of Europe. His bared arm and shoulder, though sunburnt, showed the whiter hue of colder climates, his face the sharp profile of an older race.

What did he here amid an alien people? Can a man change his race, his nation? He was the jarring note. And he looked sad, was sad. The gaiety and happiness and truth that lay upon the Burmese people passed him by. What did he there?

The observer turned and went away.

Towards the east the bluff fell steeply to the river. There were loose stones and jutting rocks and little bushes clinging to the crevices. But a path went down there, winding to and fro, narrow and laborious. Half way there was a resting-place, a broad slab of rock some few yards square, and here he sat to rest.

Above, the lights shone and the sound of the voices came like a subdued murmur; underneath the river ran. The land dreamed beneath the moon, and here and there dotted across its wide expanse were tiny pyramids of fire, other pagodas, other festivals. He sat and gazed at it. Suddenly he was aware he was not alone. Some one came climbing down, some one in boots

which rattled on the stones. No Burman surely, no one wears even shoes upon the sacred hill; none would leave the festival there to come down here to solitude.

The stranger emerged from behind the bushes and came into the moonlight. He was dressed in European dress and wore a bowler hat. He paused upon the rock and the man recognised him.

'David,' he asked, 'and is that you?'

The newcomer stared, then recognised the speaker.

'Yes,' he said, 'it is I.'

'And what do you down here away from all the people, all your friends, and all the gaiety?'

He looked confused. Then sitting on a stone he said, 'It is not my festival.'

'No, of course not. I had forgotten. Still you are here, and have been there, at the festival.'

'I brought my sisters.'

'Ah, and what does your father think of that — of coming to this Buddhist festival?'

The boy, for he was little more, shrugged his shoulders.

'All their friends are there. They wanted to come. They did not want to stop at home when every one else amused themselves.'

'Certainly it would be hard. And does not the festival amuse you too?'

The boy kicked sulkily at a pebble that fell and rattling down the rocks dropped into the river.

'Yes,' he admitted, 'only —'

'Only?'

'They did not like my feet being covered,' and he looked down at his European boots. 'And yet,' he added, 'one cannot go without boots in English dress.'

‘Do they mind? They don’t notice mine.’

‘They mind because I am a Burman. You are not. I am a Burman but not a Buddhist. That makes them angry. They turned me off.’

‘Your sisters are in Burmese dress?’

‘Yes, they like it. But I could not do it. I have risen above the people’s dress. I am European.’

‘Well then why come at all?’

The boy kicked angrily against the stones. ‘Can one live alone? Can one have no friends, and see everything going on and stand, aside? I would join but they won’t let me.’

‘Suppose you too wore Burmese dress?’

‘I mayn’t. And if I did it would be all the same. They say I am not one of them. They look at me so,’ and he scowled. ‘If the other young men make friends with me, their fathers stop them. It does not so much matter to my sisters, for they are women, and besides ——’

‘But what besides?’

‘They also light their candles at the pagoda. And why not?’ raising his voice, as if replying to some inner question. ‘Are they to have no husbands? Are they to live their lives alone?’

‘You cannot light a candle?’

‘They would not let me if I could. I want to go to England and forget these people. But my father says he cannot afford it.’

‘Do you think you would be happier there?’

‘I should be one of them there, would I not?’ he asked wistfully.

To which was answered: —

‘Perhaps it would not be so. After all, David, one

belongs to one's own people. It is the first thing of all, to be part of one's own community, to live the wider life that is in our own nation. Nothing can make that loss good.'

The boy did not answer. He was angry, hurt, and lonely. He wanted friends, companions, the sense of being part of a greater whole. Suddenly he rose and went away, his footsteps echoed along the path that led away from the bluff towards the turn. Fainter they grew until they ceased, but up above the music and the pleasant murmur sounded still.

To him, sitting there in the moonlit solitude, there came thoughts of the two men — of their unlikeness in all but this that each had left his people, to find something outside. They seemed to him as men who thinking to climb up have kicked away the ladder underneath them, and wondered that they fell. How can men so misread the facts of life?

Lafcadio Hearn becoming Buddhist in Japan wondered that as they grew the Japanese children drifted further from him. He did not understand. He too supposed as the West have always done that Buddhism is a faith apart from the facts of life. It is built on the facts of life. The Japanese children growing older were crystallised in the nation's whole, he as a foreign body was left without. He thought himself a Buddhist, and he did not know that its whole strength is that it stands on other truths. How can a child of Europe come into an Eastern nation's life? And if he could not, how could he be a Buddhist? For Buddhism is the wider nationality.

And this Oriental who thought because he professed a Western faith that he would attain to Western virtues

and ideals, how could they so mislead him? Can a truth be based upon a vacancy — or on a ruin? Hold fast to that you have and build upon it as best you can. How can you become a Buddhist by making yourself a bad Englishman? How can you be a good Christian by becoming a bad Burman? Is it a good start in righteousness to be a renegade?

The world knows better, and the world is wise.

The unit is not a man. His soul does not, cannot continue to exist alone in all its littleness and poverty. To live it must be drawn into ever-widening streams of life. And the true religion is not of one virtue, but of all; it includes all life.

So it has always been in all the world with every faith, in fact, though not maybe in theory. Truth has been stronger than a phrase, a creed, a dogma. Religion includes the whole of life, it includes the whole of men. Are the Buddhist monks the only men who cultivate religious truth? Is the soldier's honour less religious than the monk's self-denial? Is the tiller of the fields, the graver of the silver cup employed less in religious acts than those who meditate and pray?

Not so to those who understand.

And in this country they do understand that fact.

Their faith of Buddhism stands not apart, but is of the nation's life. It is but another and a later ray of light.

\* \* \* \* \*

Above, the music and the ring of cheerful voices sounded yet. It came and went in little waves of sound. The people were very happy and they were one.

A sense of solitude came over him. It comes to

all who go to a far land, sometimes. It grows with time, till it may become a sickness. It is longing for one's own, that country and that people far beyond the seas. True, across land and sea the fibres held, the impulses came still. Yet he was far away and very much alone amid a strange people in a foreign land. His own called to him and he could not go — not yet. Sometime — not yet. An immense desire for the cool winds, the rainy skies, the misty meadows, the sounds and ways and faces of his land came into his heart as they sometime or another come to every one.

He moved down closer to the river and leaned and listened. The waters swirled and moved, they lapped against the bank. There was a stir as of a woman wandering through a dream, it was the river passing on drawing her silken skirts behind her. And as she went she sang: —

‘Life is not many things but one; all life is one.

‘I draw for ever from the mountains to the sea, I rise for ever from the sea to fall and make new rivers. I am part of the world and the spirit of all life is in me.

‘My waters have been sap within the trees, they have been blood within men's veins; they will be so again. And the life that moves me, it is from the same source as that which thrills the tree, that makes men's hearts beat.

‘All life is one life, straight from one source. There is not such a thing as solitude. No one is quite alone, no one is for ever apart, there cannot be any strangers in our world. Each is a portion of the whole; we come out of the same past into the same future. No one can be alone.’

So sung the river, passing — passing always to the sea.

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Later in the night he came into the town again. The people were returning home, the lights were flickering out. And from a drinking-shop where gathered the refuse of the town, outcaste Hindus and Mussulmen, there came a disturbance and a noise. It was a quarrel.

Two policemen came and seized a man and led him out. He was quite drunk, and swayed and shouted, and as he passed the glimmer of the lamp fell on a red and stupid face — the face of David. For, after all, 'a man must have friends, must have companions; he cannot be alone.'

## CHAPTER XIII

### FATE AND FREEWILL

IN these days there was a famine.

Very long ago the rolling downs that lie along the further side the river had been fertile land. There had been rain in plenty. The streams had flowed with water that filled the tanks and fertilised the rice-fields. The upper fields had waved with cotton and with pulses. There had been many trees that made thick groves and avenues, that yielded fruit in plenty. There had been large towns and one great city, the oldest and most famous seat of kings.

Then for some reason that we know nothing of the rains grew less; not all at once but very gradually. The rice-fields dwindled bit by bit until there were but tiny strips here and there where it could get moisture enough to grow. The streams dried up. The trees began to wither and the new-planted saplings would not grow. The crops were changed. Because rice would not flourish, millets were introduced that want but little rain. New tanks were made to catch the scanty rainfall. But despite all effort the land grew more and more barren. For hundreds of square miles on what were fields the thorn bush lived alone. So the people became hard-pressed, and this land which had been the centre of population could not support its villages. The people emigrated. That which had been the greatest city of the whole great valley became



a solitude. Still there were many people left scattered in little hamlets, and by diligence and thrift in ordinary years they made a living.

But sometimes bad times came. One year the rains were barely half even the usual small total. Next year there was no rain at all.

Instead there came a hurrying wind that blew ever from the south. It never stopped; all day and night it swept over the thirsty land; it roared among the palms like breakers on a coast.

The sky was blue, not the deep strong colour of the winter months, but as if the wind had stretched a veil between the earth and sky making the latter dull and hard and dry. And there were streaks of cloud that hung upon it motionless; for the furious wind beat only along the surface of the ground. In the higher heavens was peace, and to the hill-tops on either side the valley vapours clung and long white wreaths of cloud that hardly moved.

The river rose, for on the mountains of the far north the snow was melting. Steadily it swelled, covering the banks of sand with tossing turbid water, overflowing the lower lands and making lakes. In places the river was several miles across, flowing swiftly, and the wind lashed it into anger. To south and north, to east and west was rain, coolness and shadow and refreshment, but here was desolation mocked by an unclouded sun.

Nigh half a million people starved.

All those who could go and earn a living elsewhere went away. The young men left in crowds for the lower country, where they might hope to get some work; to live and send the wherewithal to live to those who stayed behind.

Those who had money left went by rail or steamer, but they were few. The roads were thronged by bullock-carts wherein whole families started on three hundred miles of travel. Their oxen starved and died and then the people walked. Those who had boats put out on the great river. And some who had not a penny left pulled down their huts, and from the posts and planks built little rafts to which they trusted all their family. Sometimes the long reaches far as eye could see were dotted with these tiny rafts. The current took them, but round the rocky bluffs, where the wind beat back the water into waves, many fell apart and drowned those who had trusted to them.

Then famine camps were provided by Government. For the land cannot be left utterly destitute of people. Many there are who cannot emigrate, the old, infirm, women with children. There is no work to be found abroad for such. And the villages must be kept intact. A nucleus must remain to keep them together, to herd the starving cattle, reap the scanty crops that have struggled into a half life, be ready on the spot, if rain come, to plough and sow once more. Roads must remain open, law and order be kept, and for all this some of the population must stay at home.

So there were famine camps where for a small day's work, such as the weakly could perform, enough was paid to live on—just enough to live on from day to day, no more. And many thousands came into these camps.

It was a desolate time, a desolate land, a wilderness of dust tormented by the wind. The lean cattle stood about the barren fields, too weary now even to search for that they could not find. There was an agony in their eyes. The half-abandoned villages held a strange

silence in their streets, and in the camps there was a stillness.

The children played no more, life ran so poorly in their veins it had no margin left. Through the warm nights there was no song; for no man wooed, and no girl lay awake to listen.

Yet was it indeed a famine land; were these a people who had lost their all but life? Where was the loud reproach, the fist uplifted against a heaven that held no hope? Where was the fear, the anger of revulsion from a present suffering, the languor of an imminent despair?

Where were the beggars, where the lawless folk? Surely such suffering must bring forgetfulness of law, of self-respect; courage must fail sometimes.

But no! and though the people suffered and many died, they suffered and they died in silence. And in their sufferings and their death they found a victory.

And to the man who watched, it seemed the East and West held colloquy.

'You are punished,' cried the West, 'because you have not energy and knowledge. You are punished because you are poor, because you have not striven after riches, have not piled up wealth. You suffer and you die because of your own fault. You do not reap because you have not sown.'

And the East made answer: 'Can we bind the winds or bring the clouds upon the earth; are we rulers of the rain?'

The West answered: 'No. But you might save, so as to prepare against that which may come. You ought to pile up wealth on wealth and then you would not fear.'

'We do not fear,' the East replied. 'It is you who fear. You always live in fear. You dare not live from day to day. You must make piles of wealth, for fear, for *fear*. You always look forward at a fear that lives on your horizon. We do not fear.'

'Therefore you suffer and you die.'

'Maybe. Are these such evils? Every one must suffer and must die sometime. Death is not the end of life. And as to suffering, he only really suffers who has fear. We have no fear, neither of life nor death. Our fates are written, and whatever trouble there may be written it will come. Can you rule Fate?'

The West cried: 'Yes. Man has freewill.'

But the East answered: 'No.'

≡ 'Come and consider,' replied the West. 'We *have* control of Fate. We can make ourselves strong and wise and so defy it. We amass wealth, so poverty and hunger cannot touch us; we learn the secrets of our bodies, so that we cure their ills. These famine camps, are they not organised by us; these hospitals, are they not ours? These steamers that bring you food are ours. You are so weak that without our help you would die in thousands.'

'True,' says the East, 'we owe you something; and we are not ungrateful. Yet still we think that of the two maybe we have the stronger truth. You fight with poverty and pain, and to a slight extent you win. A famine such as this is where your truth shows clearest. But life is not all famine, and even out of this trouble we find gain. We learn to conquer trouble, pain, and death. You run from them. You fear them, so that all your lives you work and struggle that they may not come to you. What is your gain? We

wonder if with all knowledge and all wealth you are much healthier, richer than we are. For what is wealth? To have all that you want. We have that always, save in a great exception like this famine, because we teach ourselves that happiness lies not in wealth. You never have enough, always want more. You feel always poor and we feel always rich.

‘Think you that with all your science you are healthier than we are? Our sickly ones die quickly and their souls are freed. You keep yours chained. You answer that you save from death. No one can save from death, all you can do is to postpone it. But if you do not fear it why all this trouble? Life is eternal. The body dies, the soul lives on. With all your skill do you think that you are masters of your fate?’

‘So with your fatalism,’ said the West; ‘you suffer many ills you might escape, you remain weak and we are strong. We rule.’

‘You are unhappy, we are happy,’ said the East. ‘You are always struggling. You think you master Fate, you cannot. Only in certain things can man control his destiny. But no one ever knows what these things are. You pile up wealth, you never can be sure it will not disappear; you cannot tell that with all your skill you will not die to-morrow. Sometimes you succeed, more often you must fail. You seem to us to be always trying to do things that you cannot. One effort that succeeds is balanced by ten that fail. And when you fail you suffer. So then all your lives you are discontented, you suffer, you are afraid.’

‘But we are not. We think Fear is the only enemy. Health and wealth and power and authority they die with you. You leave them. But courage or

fear go with you. They are part of your soul. You call us Fatalists because we are not always so anxious about our future as you are, because we have hope and courage that look beyond the moment. Your view ends at death but ours goes on. You want to be certain of earthly matters. Yet in such things there is no certainty. That which endures is Will. You wish to control your bodies, we try to control our souls. You cultivate fear, we hope.

‘Famines come and go, and so does pestilence and war and conquerors. Only the soul lasts on. Your souls grow weaker the more you shield them. You become more and more afraid. Your vision grows narrower and shorter day by day. You want to be certain, and unless you think that you are so you will not venture. Unless you think that you can see the future very far ahead, that it is safe, you fear. You will not have children now, because you fear for them and for yourselves. You say: “The world is hard and they may sink. Our wealth is small and they will want of it. We dare not face a lesser comfort.” You wish to be master of your fate, and unless you think you are you dare not face it. You must be ensured against all evil. For you feel you are not strong enough to face misfortune if it come. You are afraid, we are not. You do not think that to do right will bring reward. We do. You are the real fatalists, not we. You think that man is the sport of outward things, of wealth, prosperity and strength. But we think that men rise above such things.’

The voices stopped, but the listener’s thoughts went on; they seemed to say:—

‘Each of them has a truth, but one truth by itself is

false. Let us consider, how far have we come? What is the rule of right? To understand we must begin at the beginning.

‘What is man’s first duty? It is to himself. He must preserve the life that is within him, he must have care of the body through which it works. He must make the best of both of them by work, by pleasure, to keep himself free and happy.

‘Then when love comes to him, there is a further righteousness. He is not an individual only, but part of a larger organism. His duty is to it also; to preserve it, to make it happy, strong, prosperous, and enduring.

‘The family is gathered into the web of the community and that into the State. With each increase there comes a new righteousness.

‘Yet if each new righteousness were simply added to the former ones, life would not widen and man would not progress. He would have but to listen to what they told him, and do their behests with firm closed eyes. He would have never any doubt. Life would be so simple that no one could make an error. Man would remain no more than a machine obeying unconscious forces. But it is not so. Every new righteousness not only supplements the former ones but contradicts them. Man may be called on by his duty to the State to sacrifice his duties to his community, his family, himself. Or his duty to his family may oblige him to disobey his duty to the State. He must exercise his judgment and his will. His consciousness of what is right, his conscience, must develop. He must learn to know what in each case is the right path to take.

‘Thus a man’s progress higher is a series of sub-

ordinations of a smaller self to a higher, wider self; each step is a lesson in self-denial and self-effacement. Each means a progress too in the power of choice, for as he rises the paths along which he may travel increase, and along each points a finger-post of duty. When duties clash, which is the right one? There is no fixed answer. For he cannot say "the less must give way always to the greater." That is not a truth for always. States are formed of communities and families, and for the State to be healthy so must be the component parts. A duty to the State which caused injury to the parts of which it is built would ruin the State also.

'Each case has to be judged alone, and to judge aright is hard. For to this end experience and teaching of the past may avail to some extent but not entirely. Try how you may you cannot find always precedents. For life progresses and changes ever, and never is to-day what it was yesterday. Therefore what was true then is not so now. And each man changes also; he differs not only from all other men but from what he was himself but yesterday. Therefore what might have been true for another man may not be so for him, and what was true yesterday may not be so to-day.

'Man's progress therefore is in instinctive consciousness of right, a conscience above both argument and reason; not that it contradicts them but precedes them. It must be prophetic seeing into the future. This conscience is developed by use, by uses ever greater; and therefore the difficulties and the truths of life must always grow. As life grows wider, truth grows more complex, and knowledge to choose amidst



conflicting truth must grow. This is the knowledge of Truth amid the truths. We never see Truth whole. We cannot do so. It is Infinite and we finite. But as we grow into wider life we see more truths. The Truth is all the truths.

‘So is it with Freewill and Fate. Our lives are guided by Infinite Knowledge. When we have become one with it then alone shall we be masters of ourselves. But now we cannot know, we cannot tell how far Freewill will carry us; how much we have control. Were Fate all powerful then should we be as stones acted upon by forces that are invariable. Can we have Freewill until our knowledge is perfected? Have we that knowledge?’

‘Both East and West are right and both are wrong. The East has forgotten that the soul lives and must live within a body. They are one. A perfect soul is built within a perfect body. The West is wrong because it thinks the body is all in all; that life is short. It forgets its Immortalities.

‘Such is the evolution of the soul of man. It is a rising to a wider life, a higher consciousness of Truth, greater Freewill, more perfect Immortality.’

So morning after morning dawned upon the weary land; the hot sun shone upon the wind-swept slopes, the withered grass, the faded palms. For thirteen months there was no rain. And in the famine camps the long, silent streams of workers came from out their huts to dig and carry and to live. They were become a ragged folk; their tattered garments fluttered in the wind. They earned enough to eat and that was all. And every morning down the workers’ lines there came the monks in slow procession. They made but a

small company — two old and haggard monks preceded by one boy — for some were dead and some were gone. They did not wish to be a burden on a starving land. But the people would not let them all depart. ‘Stay with us or we shall forget. And while we live, you shall not die. And if we die, shall we not die together?’

They stayed. And every morning going down the lines they gathered in their bowls enough to live.

The hungry workers kept a little back from their own hunger — a pinch of rice, a fruit.

Surely a famine even is not all bad. It makes for charity, for kinship, and for courage.

The rich West gave from out its plenty to the starving Eastern folk — a charity magnificent.

And the starving people gave from out their poverty to keep their monks alive.

‘For after all,’ they said, ‘the monks are to us a soul, and we were better dead than soulless.’

## CHAPTER XIV

### THERE IS NO NIGHT

THE weeks and months passed on and he learned gradually to see into the people's minds and hearts; to understand what they thought and what they wished to say.

They were a very simple people, living often in a rude enough way, with little of the polish of the higher civilisation. Their houses were small huts of plank and mats. They had none of the resources of the West, neither the requirements of knowledge nor the strength of a great nationality. They lived near to nature with the drawbacks that are incident to such a life, and the advantages. They neglected the attributes of life and tried to cultivate the life itself.

They had the good manners and the dignity which come of self-respect.

We speak sometimes of 'the dignity of the savage.' Why should the savage have a dignity that civilised man forgets? We call the East less civilised than we are, and yet we know it has a courtesy and self-restraint which we have not. Yet neither are they savages. It would seem perhaps as if our definition of what is civilised and what is not, required amendment. We say that we are civilised, because we are rich and strong and have acquired more knowledge. But to the East civilisation is self-culture, and it calls us uncivilised

because we cultivate everything except ourselves. We surround ourselves with comfort and with beauty, and remain unlovely masters of it all. We live in a hurry, out of breath — always struggling, fighting, hot and angry. They are more leisured. Indeed the more he watched them, learned to understand them, the more clearly he was able to see life apart from its externals, the more firmly he was assured that they lived happier lives than we do. They wanted many things we have; they had something we have never possessed. They failed where we are strong, but they were strong where we are weak. They saw life more clearly and more whole. They had to learn from us, but that lesson was an obvious one and could be seen and could be followed. For it was a lesson of externals — those things which pass. What we had to learn from them was of the inner life; the hidden, real, valuable things of life, that which endures — ourselves.

// There was a spaciousness in their lives; there was no hurry; time was long and opportunity will come for everything. Why rush to make it? Why fret and worry? Take what comes, they seemed to say, and make the best of it, for it is good. Life is good and sunshine and gaiety. It is good to be young, good to be in the strength of prime; even old age has pleasant places. There are many evil things in life, but there is no use in keeping your eyes fixed on them. Take them when they come, and have done with them quickly. After all, do not they add to the zest of life? What would it be if it was all good? Would it not be dull as an eternal day that had no night? Is not what we call 'evil' an essential of life?

Whether you are rich or poor, learned or foolish,

prince or peasant, is not such a very great matter. Each has his pleasures, his qualities. If you are rich or wise or happy remember that it is because you have worked to be so. It is no chance but a reward, and unless you make good use of each you may again become poor and foolish, for they are transitory things. If you are poor or are unhappy remember that the future is in your hand. You are low now because you have not desired to be high. You will acquire hereafter exactly what you now begin to prepare yourself for. You are what you are because you have so made yourself. It is no use to repine at your lot, to say 'Why was not I born this or that?' Heaven does not fix men's status capriciously. The gifts of this world are not shaken out haphazard. Life is not a lottery or a chance; it is not by favour or good luck that you are what you are now. You are so because you have made yourself so. And in the future you reap what you are now sowing.

This is the Buddhist belief as regards all things. As you desire, so you get; as you increase in consciousness of right, in subordination of the smaller to the larger self, in the power not only to see what is right, but to do it, so you will rise.

Here in the West we have no such belief. Why a man is born rich or poor, clever or stupid, well-looking or ugly, healthy or diseased, we have no idea. Our religion does not deal with such matters at all, the explanation of which is the very essential of our daily life. Therefore it seems to us just luck, or the favour of a Great Power. If it is luck, those who draw the bad numbers murmur naturally. Why should bad luck be theirs? If it be favour, they may sometimes in

despair shake their fists at a heaven which so deals with them. We take the unequal world as it is with no theory of why it is so, and we think that in the few short years of our life we settle our futures in eternity. We die, and then we are judged, punished, and rewarded.

But in this Eastern faith, justice, reward and punishment do not begin at death; they have been always with us. From the beginning they have ruled the world, working to some great end. If now you are born weak, poor, unhappy, be sure you have deserved it. You will not remember why. Memory is of the body, the substance through which your life is manifested. When the body dies it dies. Why should any record be kept of all the tiny events of a million million lives? No! The memory disappears but the result continues. You are what you have made yourselves, and you are conscious of that fact. You failed to rise in the consciousness of right and the will to follow it. Others did better. Therefore you are what you are and they what they are.

Be therefore of good courage. Nothing is irreparable; everything passes, evil as well as good. Take whatever punishment is given you like a man and bear it with a laugh.

That is their creed. There is one certain medicine for ills, and that is laughter. Do not let the trouble of the body eat into the mind. Keep your mind free. Sometimes this courage and this happiness will cure the ill. The body is not always master of the mind; it should be the servant. The mind should be the master. The will should dominate. It can control in many things the body; it can make cures of illness.

The West has suddenly discovered this as a new thing, the East knew it always. It can by sheer will sometimes restore the health. Not always. That time when Will shall be the Lord of All is very far from us as yet. We must have science as well as will. But if it cannot cure it can bring forgetfulness, an anodyne. The child who falls and hurts itself, is caught within its mother's arms and told 'now laugh.' It laughs; the pain-drawn lips relax, and then the pain is gone — forgotten.

Laugh! Time will make all things right. Time and eternity are not two things but one. To-day is time, but time is in eternity. Do not suppose that when you die you leap out of one dimension into another. This finite world is part of an infinite space; this passing hour is part of an eternity. That is how the Eastern world regards it.

There is never such a thing as luck. Everything that happens has its antecedent and its consequence. Whatever is, comes from something that has been. If any good or evil fortune happens to you the people say 'You have deserved it, otherwise it could not come.' In this life or some other, you have done something that has led to this.

'In this life or some previous life,' that is the difference. For in one life alone there is often no explanation, cannot be. And as in this we have no idea of any previous life, we call it 'luck.' We are very fond of that same Goddess Fortune. Be a man born rich or poor, good or bad, we have no explanation but that Fortune made him so. Even when we are scientific we continue in the same vein. We have evolved through the good or evil luck of our environment. To our

thoughts luck made this world, though righteousness may make the next. Yet if we can give no explanation of what is, are we likely to know clearly what is about to be? With them righteousness made all the worlds and rises always to a higher plane.

That is the Eastern theory of the world.

The world is full of good and full of evil, and the evil is as necessary as the good.

For consider, what do they think to be the object of the world? It is man's growth in the knowledge of what is right, and the power to will that right. Therefore must man be tempted, he must be led astray. There must be false lights and true lights, so that he may develop his strength. If there was no evil, only good, how could he progress; how could his will be strengthened?

If his way was always clear before him, he would degenerate to a machine that runs on rails, or a philosopher who lives on maxims. Evil is necessary, and the same power that made the good made the evil also, for its own righteous purpose. Therefore this world is not the devil's world but God's. It is full of beautiful things made for our happiness; it is full of evil things to make us strong. Good and evil are both from God, and there is no Devil — only another face of God.

Therefore the fear of what is to come, that fear of things which to the West is partly instinctive, partly a deliberate cult, is absent in the East. They do not fret against the present, they do not fear the future. That class hatred of poor to rich, of rich to poor, which in the history of the West is always present, and has broken out so often into terrible excesses on both sides,



is unknown in the East. Where are the Eastern equivalents for the Jacqueries which every Western land has known, which every Western land fears more and more every day? The rich do not oppress the poor nor the poor the rich as with us; there is not that difference that we make. The West grows ever nearer an abyss which fills it with a terror. There are no anarchists, no socialists in the East. Anarchy is the revulsion against a too stringent centralisation, against the collection of a nation's power and wealth in a few hands. Socialism is the revulsion against the excess of individualism whereby the few reap and the many suffer. The East has suffered from many things but never from these. Wealth and power have never had the attraction they have had in the West, have never been the sole aim of life. There is a mutual understanding and respect between the classes which we have never learned. It is not degrading to be poor, nor glorious to be rich. Money is but one of many things that may be good, not to have but to use. At best it is but a trapping for a personality. Life in itself is good. The day is good; night too is good. The West fears the night because it cannot work then, and it knows nothing but work. The East loves the night because it can rest, and rest and dreams and thoughts are pleasant things.

And death is not a terror, not an end. You close a chapter and you begin a new one. You are old and tired — tired of yourself, your limitations and your weakness — but in the next chapter you will be young again and new. You will not drag the sameness to an eternity. You will be young again, and in a world full of 'beautiful things made new for the sky children.'

Religion is a way of looking at the world. This is the Eastern way. And it must be remembered that all this comes before Buddhism. It is the foundation on which Buddhism was built. What Buddhism added to it was a later and a further truth.

## CHAPTER XV

### 'DOKA, ANEITSA, ANATTA'

So far or nearly so far had the Eastern world got in its philosophy of life before the time of Buddha. It recognised that life was eternal, that each man's soul was a ray of the eternal light, and that the light grew brighter and fuller as he travelled onward. It recognised that all law and morality are progressive. First there was man's duty to himself; then with love comes his duty to that larger self of family, his recognition of his absorption in it. Families were drawn into communities and communities into nations by new additions to the ray of life, and man's duty to each was shown to him when he was conscious of his oneness with the larger self.

In these various duties were included all the earlier virtues, courage, honesty, truthfulness, love of his own, hatred to all that threatened it, readiness to sacrifice self if need be to the needs of the larger life, and it recognised always that man did not progress by showing one set of maxims, but by his power of choice amid conflicting virtues. Such a belief, such a religion had sufficed till then; had made happy, prosperous communities, had raised learning to a high pitch, had exalted morality and uprightness.

In this belief he who afterwards became the Buddha was born and educated. It sufficed him too, for a

time; he made a brave soldier, he became a husband and a father. And then the change came.

The life of Siddartha has been written many times; there is no necessity to repeat it. It is full of imagery and pathos. It has been smothered under glosses and misunderstanding, but what it meant was this. Man, for the most part, when he is young and strong and healthy wants but this early faith. It is enough for him. It lightens the early steps of his career. It shows him where to go and how to go. Its virtues are true and great, and it is the basis on which all further knowledge must rest. But not all the world is, even when young, healthy or strong, and all the world grows old. It is a mockery to talk to the leper or the cripple of the joys of life, of the heat of battle, of the happiness of marriage; to the childless of an immortality through children. What can such teaching bring to them but bitterness of heart? We all grow old and die. Our pleasures leave us and go into the limbo of forgotten things. *Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe.* Not all of us have children, and, even when we have, children are not all of ourselves. They are a part; they take our bodies, our unconscious life into futurity, but what of our souls, our consciousness?

Not even to remember that the life that is in the individual is part of a stream suffices us, that our community lives in our nation and we in it; for, after all, at best life as we know it is a narrow thing. We have our limits, in the body and the soul — such very narrow limits. Are they to remain for ever? Are we to pass from one existence to another for ever and for ever? Life is good, but we are sure it might be

better. We can make happiness but we cannot avoid sorrow. Are we never to grow so that our happiness is great and greater and our trouble less and less? Are we to always live alone, be a tiny ray cut off from the great stream of life? There are times when it comes home to us that even at his best man is such a tiny, worthless thing in this vast universe of life. His impotence, his narrowness, his finiteness oppress us, weary us, and at the last may terrify us. Is there no escape? Must our existence always be so bound up with this body; be obliged always to submit to such restraint as we have now? Can our stream of life not flow continuously, have no beginning and no end? New birth and death, new birth and death, is that our lot for ever? Is it to be an alternation of joy and sorrow, the same things repeating themselves to an eternity? He has risen far, can he rise no further? Has he then come to the limit? There is the weariness of it; ever the same thing over and over and over again. No progress to a higher life? Surely that were a horror.

That is what came to him. It was not disgust of what is good in the life that is; it was no denial of the world, no renunciation of its righteousness; but it was an eager longing to be higher; not for less life but more, not for a different righteousness but an addition to the old. We are far from perfect happiness. Can we get no nearer?

It was a new force coming into man, it was the soul developing; the widening of the beam into the invisible rays.

Lower man feels it not. The savage lives his life, and takes his pleasure and his truth as it comes. He takes his death too when it reaches him. The immor-

tality of children is sufficient for him, as it sufficed the world for many thousand years. His soul is yet so faint that its voice is not heard. And life has still great possibilities. He does not see their end. They stretch before him and he thinks that they are infinite.

So he makes more of life and more, and as his life rises and is more complex when he has realised the wider life of community and nation, so he begins to see their finiteness. His soul rays widen, built upon that wider life. And there comes to him a discontent and a desire for yet wider life, a wider consciousness than any he can see before him. Unconscious Immortality does not suffice.

This feeling comes to nations, but it comes in greatest force to individuals amongst them. Not generally to the poorer, not to those whose life is narrowest and lowest, for they have still far prospects in their life; it comes in most force to those who have tasted most of life and understood it; not to the fool but to the wise.

In all the world's history there have been two men who felt it most, who gave it most expression, whose record has come down to us. Each was a King, a great and glorious Prince; each was accounted wisest of his day.

One of them said: 'What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth'abideth for ever.

'The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north: it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.

\* \* \* \* \*

'The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be;

and that which is done, is that which shall be done:  
and there is no new thing under the sun.

\* \* \* \* \*

'There is no remembrance of the wise more than of  
the fool for ever; seeing that which now is, in the days  
to come shall all be forgotten: and how dieth the wise  
man? as the fool.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair  
of all the labour which I took under the sun.

\* \* \* \* \*

'Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of  
the countenance the heart is made better.

'The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning:  
but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

\* \* \* \* \*

'The dead know not any thing, neither have they  
any more a reward; for the memory of them is for-  
gotten. . . . Neither have they any more a portion for  
ever in any thing that is done under the sun.'

So said Solomon, King of Israel. That was all that  
revelation taught him, an utter and unspeakable despair.

And there he stopped. He felt the question but he  
never found the answer, never set forth to seek it.

The other knew the same desire, the imperious need.  
The question is of the soul; it comes with it and is its  
law, that of the ray.

The lesser rays of life bring with them their own  
answers; the unconscious life has its instinctive answer.  
The love that makes the family, that makes the com-  
munity and nation, has each in it the answer how best  
to preserve and ensure that love and make it wider.  
Man has but to listen to what his heart dictates.

But with the Conscious Soul it is not so. It tells him not instinctively what he should do, its laws, its righteousness. It only gives to him a great desire. It drives men forth to seek. It brings not knowledge, but it says 'Go forth and learn.' For conscious life must have conscious righteousness and not instinctive. Seek and you will find.

This other Prince did not sit idly with clasped hands waiting for revelation; he set forth to seek.

And how? Where did he begin?

Did he imagine as an axiom a Great First Cause, illimitable, infinite and inexpressible, and from it argue down to finiteness? Did he begin at the unknowable and argue to the known, or send out his soul to search through space, despising that which lay about him? Did he suppose that pyramids or knowledge are built from the top down?

Not so. He was assured that what man needs to know is placed where he can reach it. What man needs to see or can see is not infinite space beyond the stars, but that which lies within his vision if he but look. Therefore he went forth and he searched, within men's souls. He wanted to build up a science of the Soul, built as all science is upon experiment and insight, to lay foundations deep and strong, not only for himself to build on, but for all ages that come after. For knowledge increases, and he did not suppose that he had learnt all things. He made but a beginning. He laid the first course of knowledge of the soul which is infinite. What was it that he learned?

\* \* \* \* \*

The floods were at their highest; the great river, brown and broad and strong, tossed like a turbulent



sea. It swept beneath the rocky bluffs in mighty curves, it ate into the banks that fell in foam into its waters. The south wind lashed it ceaselessly and the crested waves struck against the boat, the swells and eddies swung it here and there, but it kept on.

The wind that angered the river gave life and motion to the boat. The swelled sail held the hurrying air and the boat leapt forward. Even in the main mid-stream it held its way, and when it left the river and turned into a quiet lake it seemed to fly.

At the far end of the lake in rising ground stood a pagoda. It was very high, so high that you could see it from all the country round. For thirty miles it was always within sight, the golden top aglow in bright sunlight; while round it in soft billows surged the leafy greenness of the tamarinds and palms. The boat came to the shore beneath it; the people landed. Up from the shore they climbed across the turf, and at an avenue's end they came through the tall archway into the broad courtyard. It was like entering another world. There was a serenity and peace that brooded there as if the fret of life without were halted by its gates. You could see nothing of the outer world but trees and lake and sky lit with the living light. Even the hastening wind was still, and in the midst, like the still finger of an impassioned listener, the great spire pointed ever to the sky.

On one side were three monks sitting looking at the shrine. A man leaning on a stone seemed filled with thought; and beneath a tree a woman told her beads. Doka, aneitsa, anatta. She looked old and worn and very tired.

Here and there were other women. On the far side

an aged couple knelt near the pagoda's base and lit two candles which they placed upon the base. A cripple sat by a stone lantern staring at the sky, and ever and anon the pigeons moaned. Doka, aneitsa, anatta; doka, aneitsa, anatta; nothing is true and nothing stays with us; all goes and passes like a vision, only we are left behind. Naught stays with us but memories and tears. Doka, aneitsa, anatta. It was the undertone of the world's sorrow. Here where the noise and tumult of life's battle could not come, you heard the cry.

The old woman amid her prayers thought of what she had lost. Husband and children, all had gone before her. She lived alone, and every weary morn brought to her but remembrance of the joys that had been hers. Her days were vacant, and her dull, bleared eyes saw naught but faint reflections from the long ago.

The girl who prayed and sobbed and laid her face upon the stone to cool its fever, thought upon her lover dead. Can the days bring pleasure more? 'Light of my life, if only I could follow. Why am I left alone to face the recurring years?'

The cripple gazing on his twisted limbs remembered their once strength and comeliness. 'I who once leapt and ran, now crawl through life in poverty and dreariness'; and looking on their trouble the daylight seemed to die out of the sky. The air was full of greyness, and only one truth was left: 'Illusion, vanity, despair; there is no true word but this.'

It seemed the cry of uttermost despair.

And yet? He sat to listen.

Was it indeed despair that echoed in their voices; was it fear? Were they as those who have abandoned

hope? They had no tears; they raised no hands in threats against the sky; their voices were soft, not hard. Like the murmur of the pigeons on the flags it seemed fraught with peace, and though they stayed there long, yet when they passed he saw that calm had come to them.

The agony was passed, the darkness gone. Upon their faces was wonder and a glory such as comes upon the sky what time the dawn is near — a radiance from that which is not seen. Doka, aneitsa, anatta. *Tout lasse, tout casse, tout passe.* Yes; sorrow, pain and weariness, trouble and despair, and change, *they* pass.

Unhappiness and misery are but for a time. They too have no reality. They go, they pass, and we remain.

The old man and his wife came slowly past. They leant upon each other and they smiled. 'Doka, aneitsa, anatta,' she murmured and passed on.

'Tell me,' he asked himself, 'what is the comfort in such words? They seem like the last word of a self-abandonment. What do they mean?'

This is the answer.

Man is as one who floats down a broad river. When he is young he laughs, he looks ahead; he stands right in the bows to welcome each new vision. All is fresh and bright and very happy. The stream flows slowly, pouring a crystal flood over a sand of gold. The banks are lined with trees and flowers, all manner of beautiful things, and the birds sing. He wishes the stream flowed faster, so that he could come more quickly to the strange new lands he sees ahead. There are many others floating with him; they make a merry company and sing.

As he goes on the prospect widens, he can see very

far before him and on either side; the stream is deeper, stronger, darker. Sometimes there are rocks and eddies, whirlpools and hidden dangers, but he laughs at them. They but add fresh incident and raise his courage, though there are some who shipwreck on them. The sky is blue still, and the storms that sweep across it pass rapidly away.

Broad noon is come.

In the pleasant anchorages he would stop and rest. He looks not so much to the future as on either hand. He finds the present good, and he would know it better, stay with it longer. But he cannot. The river bears him on.

The afternoon draws on. And now sometimes he leaves the bows and looks astern. He is sorry to go so quickly, to leave these pleasant fields and sunny waters; for he sees ahead of him deserts bare and gaunt, mountains that close the view. Upon their crests are clouds that never lift, lightning and threatening of fear; he turns away to look behind. He wishes the river did not flow so fast.

And now the banks are changed, the flowers are gone. The meadows harden into rocks, and rise so that the river flows within a gorge that ever deepens. From the thick darkness forward comes a summons that grows more imperative. Surely there is a precipice; he will be lost. Yet to that end the river hastens. Why does it hurry now? He is afraid and sad and very much alone as from the stern he watches with increasing sadness the sunny landscape disappear. For there are mists behind him, and though they gleam with colour of long-past days, they hide the distance. He lives now in his memories of what has been. His eyes are on the past. The cataract grows nearer and he is alone.

Then cries a voice to him: 'Have courage. What is the use of watching what is gone? For it is gone. You never really held it. The happiness is past, and things once past are to the watcher but a vain regret. They will not return. The river flows not back but onward, and if it could return you would not like it. You are tired and must have rest. And then new things: not always the old again, but greater happiness and clearer sunshine, and in the end a country where you may stay and live for ever. Doka, aneitsa, anatta. Sunshine has gone, it was but for the moment, but so is sorrow and darkness. Neither are real for you because neither abide with you. They are illusions, and will pass and be forgotten. Nothing is real, only yourself. And you, when you have passed the rapids, will arise stronger and freer — if you have courage — if you have courage. Go back then to the bows, and steer your course so that you make not shipwreck. Look ever to the future. Doka, aneitsa, anatta.

'That is what the words mean, and consider if they are not true.

✓ 'Doka, aneitsa, anatta. It is to realise this first that is the necessity. Nothing remains: all things are real only while you hold them; once gone they leave but their effect on you behind. And why remember the past unless to help you through the future? Doka, aneitsa, anatta. This is not despair, but hope. We are weary of all that is; we want new things — new life, new youth, new hope — and they will come. There is no stagnation and no death, only a ceaseless progress forward — for those who understand.

'Go back into the bows and watch.

'Death is the Great Romance.'

## CHAPTER XVI

### 'THE WAY'

HE must look forward — but to what? He must learn to steer and not to drift — but to what end? Where is the compass; which are the stars by which to steer? What does happiness and unhappiness consist of? To understand the conclusions the Indian Prince arrived at twenty-five centuries ago it is necessary first to realise how far his world had got already.

In the essential laws that govern the family, community, and the State, they had nothing more to learn. All that the greatest people have known since they knew; differences have appeared only in the way these laws have been followed or disregarded. In family relationship, the encouragement of science, commerce and industry, in State organisation for war and peace, they achieved all that was then possible. They recognised fully that man had risen from lower forms; that his progress was always towards larger units, wider righteousness. This they realised up to the State and even to humanity. But it seemed that there the limit came. You could not have a progress beyond humanity as an unit, and humanity is made of individuals, of men, and therefore the end was nearly reached. To make the individual, the State, humanity somewhat more of one, was all that could be done. Man was the highest form of life, we could imagine no other, therefore

apparently the soul of man was bound to eternal narrowness within the limits of personality. There was no escape.

It is true that in some vague way it was seen that further advance was not so much in bodily life, as in the soul life which was then making itself felt. The soul, that is Knowledge and Will, must grow wider, greater, stronger, and have completed empire over the body, which cramped the Will by its limitation. This led to the idea that the body was an enemy to be fought against, conquered and destroyed. India then as now was full of mystics, ascetics, saints whose fight was against the body. To this end they brought themselves to endure all sorts of pain and abstinence and degradation without a murmur; they tried to kill sensation. They sat naked to deaden modesty; they exposed themselves to heat and cold to deaden sensation; they starved themselves; they lived in dirt and shamelessness. Its object was to exalt the human Will, and in this they to some extent succeeded and succeed. They demonstrate daily what an immense empire the Will has over the flesh. But it led to nothing. Common-sense was disgusted at their mystics, and saw no future that such teaching pointed to.

Again, as to the virtues. All those that pertain to family, village, national life they fully recognised. Bravery, industry, the search for knowledge, the subordination of self to the wider necessities of wider units they saw clearly.

And there were some who began to see more — that there were other virtues, of the increasing soul.

These virtues are complementary to the others, are in a way a contradiction to them. To courage is op-

posed meekness; to industry, poverty; to knowledge, trust and faith; to pride in oneself, one's family and nation, was set up humility; to assertion of one's own view of life was set up charity. The wise men who felt these virtues preached them. They said: 'It is good to be meek and pure and humble; these are virtues whose rank is with the highest. It is good to follow them.'

But their hearers asked them: 'Why is it good? To what end are these virtues; whither do they tend? They appear to us a dangerous doctrine and untrue. Consider and explain. For instance courage, that is necessary to every form of individual and corporate life. We see that meekness is dangerous to them. Would you ruin what we have built up; would you destroy family and corporate life?

'Again, where is their Immortality? Every new righteousness that comes to man has with it an Immortality to justify it. If men ask, Why should I obey the impulse to die for my country? the answer is, Because your country benefits and your life continues in it.

'That we can see, dimly perhaps, but still we see.

'But in what Immortality is this new righteousness justified?'

The wise men had no answer.

They never answered as in the West some might, that you should do 'right for right's sake, truth for the sake of truth,' indifferent to what the result may be — whether indeed there ever is any result. They did not answer so, for the East would have mocked at any such reply.

For the East believes that righteousness is justified



in its results: that if you do what is right you will certainly benefit by it, and if you do wrong you will suffer. There is a sequence and a consequence. The West would say that it is a higher and more attractive ideal to do what is right because it is right, than because we benefit; that the latter is purely selfishness. To which the East would answer, So be it, if in such windy generalities you find anything that pleases you. Only answer two things — How can you tell what is right and what is wrong except from observation of their results? Do you deny that doing evil has evil consequences, doing good has good consequences? Do you think it immaterial to your future what you do; that conduct and righteousness have no connection? For if you do, we must part company. To believe such a thing, the East declares, would lead to this, that a man would say to himself, 'As long as I have high ideals it does not really matter what I do. The ideal is the important thing, and as to what is right or wrong, why, any impulse may be right. Who is to say? You can gather fruit if you sow weeds, and weeds if you sow fruit.'

That is indeed what the West is always saying to itself: that if a man say he believe in God, Right, Wrong, Hell, Heaven — things which no one can define or express — it does not matter what his acts are. So you get Popes and Bishops who murdered, warred, and committed every wickedness; so you get men now who go to teach the 'Heathen' of another world, and spend their time trading and governing in this.

No; for ever No. Religion to the East is a matter of realities, of conduct, of righteousness; not of mere profession, of ideals that are *ex hypothesi* impossible to

conceive. If you do your right your righteousness shall be justified.

✓ And this besides. The West thinks that 'I' is 'I' for ever; but the East, 'You are part of a great whole, and in cultivating yourself you add to that whole; in neglecting yourself you make it weaker. It is a duty you owe to the World's Soul to care for that tiny bit that is in you.'

Neither did they answer that the Immortality where such virtue would meet its reward would be beyond the stars, far out of sight; for the people would have asked how they knew of such a heaven and such an Immortality. By revelation? The East is sceptical of revelations and of dreams. How then? So the wise men were silent. They were sure that there was virtue in the new righteousness; they felt that it had beauty and had truth. But how, or where, or when, they could not say. Therefore the people would not listen.

It was to put order into this disorder that the Indian Prince went forth. He tried, as all teachers try, by experiment. He went to each school in turn and learned what they had to teach, and then at last he came to his conclusion. What this conclusion was is this.

Man's progress has been always from smaller to greater units. In that has he found his happiness. What he has always felt and suffered from was the finiteness and the smallness of his personality, that it has been divided from the great flood of life. His urgent need has been a wider, greater life; a larger self to enable him to know more, to do more, to have more power over himself and the world, to be no longer the toy of the brute force of the world. Every step

forward has been made by the recognition of a new righteousness, and each new righteousness has been a contradiction and a complement to those before. As the righteousness of the family is to that of the individual, as the righteousness of the State is to those of the community and family, so is the new righteousness to them. It does not deny them, it supplements them. If it should lead to destruction of those before, it would not be a righteousness, for all righteousness is built upward from below. The duty to the State though on occasion it may seem to contradict the duty to the family, yet does not do so on the whole, for the State is made up of families, and in the end the families gain, they do not lose by being in the State. They do not lose their life or their identity, but these are widened.

In such manner must these new truths be understood, not as supplanting the old but supplementing them; therefore never to be feared if properly understood. They but fulfil all that went before. They are an addition to knowledge.

But what is the object of Knowledge? It is to know what is right and to have the Will to do it; Will governs Power. Every new aggregation gives a greater Will, a greater Power. A community can do what any number of individuals cannot; a State can do what a thousand communities would fail in. But aggregations are made of individuals. Therefore must Will be cultivated in each entity, so that the total may be increased. The mystics and ascetics searched the dominion of Will. But their mistake was that they made the bodily life an enemy. It is no enemy, but should be an ally and a servant. Conscious life is built upon unconscious life. You cannot degrade the

temple and exalt him that lives there. If you destroy the life, the soul goes with it. Progress lies not in that way.

The full life is the sum of all the rays, the Power of the unconscious forces ruled by the Knowledge and the Will of conscious life. Again it is the same symbol — you must build up, not down.

Now as to the results; for good has good results and evil has evil results.

Try it and you will know; let each man prove it for himself. When the cry comes, the urgent cry that life is but a shadow and an unreality, then try and see if following the Way does not give Peace. All men who try it say it does. They say it gives serenity and happiness and courage. It makes life beautiful again; it gives you back in sunset splendour the glories of the dawn.

// All the troubles that we suffer from come from the fact that ourselves, our consciousness, that which exists, is subjected to the perpetual changes of our body, over which we have little control. It is adrift upon life's tide that ebbs and flows continually. Evil is of the body; happiness is of the spirit, of the Soul. To enlarge happiness we must cultivate the soul and make it broader, greater, stronger. The beam must contain all the rays.

And always we must remember that the individual is not the unit. It is because he is now an unit that we are so weak. If our separateness endure, so must our weakness. As the man gains by becoming one with others in a nation, so the Soul's beam must be reunited to the great flood of life which is the world. There is its Immortality.

You say you cannot see it, cannot realise it. No! But can one ever realise an Immortality? When the man dies for his country, does he do it because he is sure he himself will benefit thereby? He does it because he has the impulse, because it is a law of his life.

So with the Soul. This later righteousness is the law. As the Soul grows, so does the desire to observe these virtues. And with that desire, that instinct, comes the certainty that they will have their justification, if not at once, then later. They bring with them the certainty of the wider, stronger, greater life of which they are the law. You will not recognise it while you stand aloof. It cannot be explained in words. If you were to try to explain in words to those to whom the wider life of nationality has not come, that men obey its laws and sacrifice the present because they are sure that the future will reward them, they would not understand. How can a soldier dead upon a battlefield live on in his country's life? No one can say. But he is sure he will.

Self-renunciation, self-denial, the merging of the lesser in the greater life, that is The Way the Indian Prince made out. He lived it and he found it true. His disciples and his followers have found it true — a facet of the truth. Always where understood, men have believed it; but men must have been in a position to understand it. When it was first taught and men accepted it in millions they were wise and free and strong. Their ability to understand was based upon high civilisation, upon knowledge, upon freedom. Never in the history of the world have there been communities who in relation to their time have done so

well with life; who had such broad and sound understanding, who were so varied in their abilities. Nature they understood, though not in detail, yet in principle. They had a subtle sympathy with it. They knew of evolution. In all the main things of life, two thousand five hundred years have added nothing except in detail. Therefore when Buddha taught they understood. His teaching came as but a continuation of what they knew. He was to them no prophet, but a Darwin of the Soul, and they could follow what he said and still more what he meant. They were in harmony with him and knew.

When Buddhism fell from India the lesser truths had vanished first, the people rotted from below as peoples have always done. They lost their knowledge and their grip of life, no one knows why. They lost the early righteousness of family, community, and state. Therefore the higher righteousness fell too at length, for it had become unintelligible. The truths upon which it stood, of which it was but the continuation, had gone. Its imagery therefore had no light to illumine it, and lost its meaning and its truth. It is a religion of free men, of free will, of wise men not of fools. Its ideal is all knowledge, all strength, all righteousness.

This simple faith which is founded upon a view of the whole of life was supposed to be apart from life, was supposed to contradict life and deny it. When it was said that evil was the result of the present conditions of life, its narrowness, its gripping to a tiny personality, it was supposed to declare that life was itself an evil. It was thought its ideal was the end of life — annihilation. When you take up the scattered

spectrum and blend it again into the white light do you annihilate the individual rays? The ideal of the Indian Prince was not less life but more; the greater, fuller, grander light.

A truth that stands alone becomes more false than any falsehood.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THAT GREAT GIFT OF CHARITY

THAT was what the Indian Prince discovered, and to cultivate those truths and keep them pure, to discover maybe future truths, a brotherhood was founded. For he did not think that his truth was the only truth in life, and that all men should follow it. A truth it was amongst many others, the last discovered but not the final truth. All truths have guilds to keep and teach them: soldiers and merchants, artisans and grammarians, every form of truth has its own school. Associations can best maintain and cultivate a side of life, and they best can spread abroad its influence, so that it leavens all the rest of life. That was the genesis of the monks of Buddhism. Founded two thousand five hundred years ago, it yet endures in Burma as strong, as pure, as when first it was instituted. In every town and village are the monasteries, built apart if possible, for peace and quietness. Some are tiny huts of bamboo roofed with thatch, and some are great and spacious buildings, beautiful without with gold and carvings. Within, all are of the plainest and simplest. In the 'Gold City' are many, shrunken now in size maybe from what they used to be in the King's time, but with monks no less preserving the purity of their lives. To one of these the man came to talk. For the monk was of those the most revered and honoured through-



out all the country, and one who was not afraid to talk of that he knew to those who tried to understand.

The sun had set behind the hills and darkness was growing on the city. A glow was in the sky and on the river, and a cool wind from off the waters blew into the fevered streets. The sound of people passing to and fro, the hum of voices, the creak of carts, came like a far off murmur within the monastery walls. In the dusk two gilded leogriffs before the stairs seemed to hold yet some of the sunshine that had been.

The Abbot continued speaking slowly and with thought. 'A brotherhood was founded to preserve these truths, two thousand and five hundred years ago. We are of that brotherhood to-day. We keep, as we were told to do, the truths that were given to us for our benefit and that of all the world. We are their guardians. It is our duty to preserve them pure.'

'What are these truths?'

'That life is passing; that happiness we cannot hold — like sand it slips between our fingers. Nothing of the flesh remains, only the spirit is eternal. That our unhappiness comes from our loneliness, from being a ray apart, divided from the eternal; that full, enduring happiness can only be when we are reunited.'

'These are not all the truths of life?'

'The world is full of truths: the soldier has his, the king has his, the peasant his; to every set of men is entrusted some truth by which alone he lives. It takes all kinds to make a world; it takes all worlds to make an universe, a Truth. There are no truths that are higher, none that are lower; all truths are true, and they do not conflict; each is necessary to the other.

'Yet every truth must have its keepers or it dies.

Courage and honour and steadfastness and obedience are the soldier's truths; authority and understanding are the king's; honesty and intelligence and progress are the merchant's. There are many truths, and the world needs them all. Every father, every mother, every child has his own truth to keep — an ideal and a practice, of which the ideal is easy, but the practice very hard both to see or do.

'What our ideals are I have already told you; of the way that we think best whereby they may be kept, not only for ourselves but for the world, is more difficult.

'How may we cultivate the spirit?

'The first thing is health, sanity of mind and body. That is a truth common to all people, because on that alone can other virtues rest.

'But as the labourer has his toil in the fields, the fisherman his struggle with the waters, the student his mental efforts which call for bodily vigour and replace of waste, whereas our cultivation of the spirit brings calm and peace, so do we not require what they do. One meal a day is enough to give us health, more would induce an energy that would have to be expended in some way. Starvation leads to dreams and visions, weakness and ill-health. One good meal a day, life in secluded, quiet places; not away from the world because we are still of the world, an essential part. We hold our truths not for ourselves only but for the world, for all, as the soldier his, the ploughman his. Far enough away not to be drawn into the whirl of other life, but near enough not to be forgotten or forget.

'Not to be forgotten, not to forget!

'We must not be forgotten; we must be seen, be

known for our sakes and the world's. For our own sakes because the watchfulness of others helps us to keep our truth. It is a strength to us, a help, that when we go wrong we should be seen and censured; that when we go right the truth in us should have its honour.

'We must not be forgotten, for our truth is not ours alone; we keep it not for ourselves, but for all men. It is like the treasure of a King that is for all the people.

'We must not forget. We must not let ourselves imagine that we are apart from the world, that we alone are righteous and the world wicked. We must remember always that all truths are true and ours is only one. We must be sane, have balance; the truths of others, though not ours, must influence our lives.

'We must live in poverty, we must be poor, we must own nothing of our own, must wear poor clothes, and we must seek our bread from day to day. Not for us is the pomp of wealth, the luxury of power, the pride of independence. We must show that there is a virtue and a pleasure also in the counterpart of prosperity — in having nothing, earning nothing. It leaves us free for the pleasures and duties of the spirit. These are our treasures; if we did not keep them who would keep them? And are they not worthy of a keeper? If the world did not have them always before its face it would forget them.

'These are our own. We do not say to all the world, Your truths are false. They are not false. But we say, There are other truths. It is not given to every man to be successful, rich, energetic, even independent. Many must be dependent even as we are, poor nearly as we are, with no more worldly success than we have.

‘We show to such that steadfastness, dignity, and respect of self and of the world are not the attributes only of worldly success, of wisdom or of strength. They may be cultivated also by the poor, the simple, the dependent. We are dependent day by day for our very bread; we are weak, we are not learned; are we less honoured for that? Does it make us servile or fearful; do we lose in dignity? If we do not, then why should any man? Servility is loss of courage and of respect; it comes from fear of loss of worldly things. If you have nothing and are still happy and content, who can take from you your happiness? We show that calmness and dignity come not from without but from within. They are attributes not of what you have but what you are.

‘But the greatest of our treasures is that of charity. There are two charities — charity of hand, and charity of mind. The giving of money, food, and property we cannot ourselves practise because we are vowed to poverty, a vow that we keep. Therefore we have nothing of any kind to give. We only can receive, and that but little; only enough for our daily, scanty wants. But we can teach it. The people learn what a beautiful thing it is to give even the little that we take from them — the cup of rice, the fruit, the flower. They learn thereby that the best pleasure of being able to get, is being able to give. So they not only build monasteries and feed the monks, but they overflow with charity of all kinds. Is not that so? Tell me, have you not seen the charity of the people? What have you seen?’

Truly the man thought it was so. He had never seen elsewhere such true charity, such gifts, not of the

surplus of wealth but of the savings from very small means; given without ostentation and for its own sake alone. The rest-house on the road, built by the labourer with his little savings; the pots of drinking water for the traveller, filled by the widow who had naught to give except the labour of her hands; the famine workers with their grains of rice.

They give. Well, many people give, for charity is world-wide. They give but little for they are poor.

But in their giving is a grace that makes the gift thrice welcome. For they are glad to give. They make a pleasure of it. They try to make him who receives, feel that he has conferred a benefit and not received one. They do not say, Take this, and in return surrender somewhat of your self-respect. To give is good, to ask is evil; but to take that which is offered, and which your need requires, with courtesy, with recognition, and without injury to yourself, that too is good. Truly it is a science in itself to give and take; the gift of pride, of ostentation, may convey a poison.

To know when and how to give and take. That is what the monks have taught them.

The Abbot asked, 'Tell me what is in your thoughts? You laugh.'

He told him, and the Abbot laughed.

'My friend, if we practised all the virtues as our people do that of charity we should do well.'

'That is one charity; tell me of the other.'

'The other is more hard. It is more difficult because sometimes it seems as if its opposite should be the virtue. It is harder, just as things of the mind are harder than things of the hand. We have our truths

that we keep and honour; some I have told you of, others are yet to come. They are great virtues; we hold them for ourselves to be the truest, nay the only true. Yet charity is this, that we remember there are other truths in other keeping.

‘We have truth but not all truth; our truths are great and glorious, but so is every truth. Charity is this, that we remember that if we have a jewel, so have others; if we keep it well, so do the other keepers. Our truths are in themselves no truer than the soldier’s truth, the merchant’s truth, the peasant’s truth; no greater and no less. All truths are equally necessary to the world, of the same worth. You will never reach the Truth if even the tiniest truth be omitted. Therefore we must never think that we are better than others of mankind who keep their truths. Every one who keeps his truth in honesty and courage is of equal worth.’

‘That is a hard thing.’

‘Truly,’ said the Abbot, ‘it is hard. For to every one who keeps a truth it is the one thing needful. Sometimes it may seem as if he could not keep it rightly unless he thought so, unless he was sure of it. Indeed to him it must be so. But he must also remember and honour the others.’

‘In the white light no ray predominates.’

And looking down upon the city he remembered many things that happened twenty years ago. There was the march of our columns up the river, the weak resistance, the want of organisation, of courage, and of leading among the Burmese troops. There was the surrender at the Palace door below there; the vacillation and weakness of the King; the want of patriotism,

of intelligence, of honesty amongst the Ministers. There was the broken, scattered resistance afterwards, which had never any chance of success. And now all the institutions that had grown up within their nation, of the crown, the government, the soldiers, the Courts of Justice, and everything that pertained to them were gone. They had disappeared. Of all that had been, there remained only the people and the monkhood. One institution and one truth alone remained, because in that alone had its truth been kept strong and pure and clear; because there alone were men honest and sincere and heart-whole in cherishing their truth. And he thought how changed it all had been had they had Kings as devoted to Kingcraft, soldiers to the art of war, judges and magistrates to law, merchants and engineers and inventors to the business of peace, artists to their arts, with as sincere self-denying absorption as these monks have to their truths.

Nothing remains but truth. Nothing remains in Burma but the peasant in his family and the monk, because of all classes of men these alone kept their truths. The peasant cultivates the soil with labour, honesty, intelligence, and courage; both men and women love their family and keep it. The monks within their monasteries cultivate their ideals with single-hearted devotion. Therefore they remain. But the rest are gone, swept into oblivion because they neither saw their truth nor kept it.

It is the history of the world. Falsehood and insincerity and lassitude and cowardice are swept away. They do not die — war kills them; it sweeps away the weeds and leaves an open field again. It is the cleanser of the world. It cannot injure truth; it but makes it

stronger in the end; but shams it kills. Who are they who would abolish war? There are men and peoples and institutions who may justly fear what war will do to them. But true men, true things, have never any fear. Nothing can harm them. They live on and they grow stronger. Danger is always from within and not without.

The Burmese Kings have fallen, the Burmese armies were scattered, the Burmese merchants drop beneath competition. But the monkhood lives.

‘We do not urge men to come into our brotherhood. We would not have a monk unless he wished to come. Truth is progressive, and to each man at the proper time the proper truth is shown. For most people, when they are young, the proper truths are to be husbands and wives, good citizens, good workers. These are true lights for those who see them; let them follow. A few there are who from childhood even have a desire to learn the Way, and these are welcomed.

‘Yet must every one go through a period of probation that he may be sure. And even then we think it best that he should take the vows only for a time.

‘For remember that the essence of our truth, the end to which we aim, is not to follow this set of rules or that, this righteousness or that. The end is knowledge of all right, and Will to do it. Will, the cultivation of the Will.

‘What therefore would it profit to observe our rules unwillingly, because you must? Our aim is freedom, self-restraint, and not restraint of laws or persons. He who cannot restrain himself should never come to us. Let him learn the rudiments elsewhere. Let him be a soldier and be made to obey, if he cannot observe what is right without compulsion. Obedience is not



an end, and as a means it must be used elsewhere. We are free men, not slaves; we hold our souls in our own hands. No one can save them for us. What knowledge and what power do men obtain by doing that they are commanded? You must see right yourself, not others for you.

‘No one may come to us unless he will to do so; no one may stay with us unless he will to do that which the Teacher said; to do it because he greatly desires to do so. We welcome children to our monasteries and we teach them of the Way; for all should know of it. But we do not ask them to be monks.

‘Why should we? What would it profit us, or them, or any one? Learn to know right, and acquire the will to do it. Self-knowledge, self-control are what we follow.’

That is why in Buddhist teaching Government is called an evil, because whatever a man does on compulsion, does not add to his moral stature. The knowledge and the will are others’; he is but a passive instrument. He gains no more by it than the sword gains by being wielded by the soldier. Yet of course, as the world stands now, sometimes compulsion is necessary. No good monk would say that the villagers, the public opinion which helped monks to keep their vows and chased away any who broke them, could be dispensed with. Until men can all will to do right compulsion may be necessary, a necessary evil. So is Government a necessary evil, and the more it interferes when not absolutely necessary, the greater the evil. It is an assertion that the aim of all men and institutions should be not to cause certain things to be done, but to come and help men to want to do them.

Therefore in the Buddhist monkhood is no authority, no organisation, no compulsion like that in Western Churches. Obedience is in itself no virtue. Men become monks, and sincere monks, because they desire the right.

And if we ask for justification could there be any like the Burmese Buddhist monkhood? It is by far the oldest religious community in the world; it is the purest; it has more honour from the people amongst whom it is placed than any other ever had. Let him who doubts this go and see. And if he cannot, let him read that wonderful tribute from the Catholic Bishop, Bigaudet — that ungrudging, though unwilling tribute given by a great soul to truth, though not his truth, for which his book was put upon the Index.

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And in the end what is the great and vital principle of truth that lies beneath, that animates this monkhood? What is it that enables them to live as they live, to preserve their truths bright, to endure as they have? It is not alone that they have virtues of their own, it is not even that they keep them. It is that they recognise that man the individual does not last, is not the unit. All life is one Life; all truths make one truth; all the rays make the White Light. That is what they mean by 'Charity.'

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MAN'S FAITH AND WOMAN'S

BEYOND the village near the river there was a garden full of plantain trees and custard apples, plums and mangoes, and in the middle of the garden was a house. The man who lived there had a history. He had been, under the Burmese Kings, a soldier and the governor of a district. In the war he fought against us and became a noted leader of guerilla bands. There were many tales about his doings in these days — of his personal courage and the discipline he tried to bring his followers under, of his fights and his escapes. For three years he had defied our troops and then his band dispersed or died; the country settling down about him, he saw the uselessness of further effort. He surrendered and was deported. But after five years he was allowed to return, and here he settled down beside his old village and did a trade in timber.

It seemed that he had in him some blood that differed from the people round him, some of the iron of the colder north. His blood ran slowly; he was taciturn and grave, not gay as were his neighbours. Yet he was one of them; a leader still, though not in war; a head of the community. The Englishman had often seen him, often spoken to him, and yet he felt he knew but little of him. Beneath his courtesy there was a reticence that left but little opening, and he kept

himself so much apart, living within his garden, that acquaintance came not quickly. But on one morning early, walking in the hills beyond the village, he came upon the Burman seated gazing on the view before him. The Englishman drew back, unwilling to disturb a solitude that evidently had been sought, but the soldier rose and smiled. 'You seek a view?' he asked. 'I do not think that you will find a better one than this.' He waved his hand towards the sunlit fields that sloped to the broad river, and that stretched mile after mile till purple mountains on the further bank closed the scene.

They sat together on the hillside and they looked.

'You seek a site to build another house?' he asked. 'You could not have one more beautiful than this.'

The soldier shook his head. 'No house. Yet I will build here; not for the living, but the dead.'

'A tomb?'

'My wife is dead,' he answered quietly.

'And you would make her grave here on this hill?'

'She loved the woods,' the soldier answered; 'the trees, the fields, the sun, the river. Now she is dead, her soul has left me, and in my house there lies only the empty shell wherein her soul inhabited. The soul that lived there, that spoke through her lips, saw through her eyes, is gone. Yet because when she was with me she loved all beautiful things, I seek to lay that broken lamp from which the light has fled here where the things she loved are stretched before her. Is it not well?'

'Surely it is well.'

'I will build a pagoda over the grave, and beside it a little rest-house where those who climb up here may

sit and find some water. And on that further rise will I build a monastery where some monks may live.'

'Tell me,' asked the Englishman, 'why should you build the monastery. Are you about to become a monk?' He had known many men be so under such circumstances.

The soldier shook his head. 'Not for me,' he answered. 'What should I do within a monastery? I am not such as monks are made of. But she who is dead loved and honoured that they teach. She gave every day some food, went every week to hear the law read out, and all day in every moment of her life she tried to understand and keep, as far as may be, the teacher's words. It is a beautiful thing to be a woman and be able to do as she did.'

'And men, cannot they do so?'

The soldier shook his head. 'The world has many truths and men's are different. Mine at least is different. It was given to me to be a soldier and to fight, and I followed my truth as best I could. Not very well, I fear; you always beat us.'

'And you would fight again?'

'Again and again if ever I saw a chance of winning. But there is none. Why get men killed for nothing? No. I shall not fight again, but still that is my truth and shall be till I die. Oh, that again I saw the light and felt the joy of battle!' His eyes grew bright.

'Tell me,' the Englishman answered, 'how you can feel like that and yet be Buddhist? Does one contradict the other? You build pagodas and you help and honour monks. How do you reconcile these things?'

The man reflected. Then he said: 'It is like this.

Look on the scene before us. The earth is wide: we see for many miles, and yet beyond these hills and that horizon the world goes on. And there are other worlds. What we see even from this hill is but a little. Yet in that little there are many things. There are hills and valleys and plains, high land and low, good land and bad, wet land and dry. There are rivers; there are trees and bushes, grasses, plants of a hundred kinds. There are birds and beasts and fishes. There are ploughmen and palm-climbers, and hunters and fishermen, and weavers and traders, and many more. There are men and women. To make that scenery how much is necessary? Take one part away and all would fail. Each has its truth and each is necessary to the other. I would not have the world all plain, all hill, all water. So is it with man. I do not cultivate the fields, but there must be cultivators. I do not fish, yet there must be fishermen. I have my own work to do according to my nature. Each part is necessary to the whole. No fisherman if he is wise would want all the world to be a lake, no peasant would make it one great rice-field. Each knows the other is necessary. And so is it with other matters. The virtues of the monks are not for me. I have my own. But they are necessary, and I see that they are beautiful and true. The world would seem to me terrible if they were not there.'

'For whom then are they?'

'Primarily for women. We have our virtues, and the women have theirs different from men. And in what the monks teach and preach is much of the truth of woman.'

The man reflected. 'Truly,' he answered, 'it comes more near them than to men.'

‘It is they themselves — their soul.’

‘But not for men?’

The Burman smiled. ‘Consider,’ he said, ‘the women. They are not as we are. We are hard and they are soft; we are strong and they are weak. They love to dress themselves, to make themselves beautiful, and we love that they should do so. They have their ways of doing hair, of dress, of wearing jewels, of walking, of standing, of talking, of laughing. They are different from men, and we admire them because they are different. A woman resembling a man, no man cares for. But because we love women and their ways we do not want to imitate them. We do not desire to be weak or soft-hearted; we should be ashamed to wear their dress or ornaments. The more a man loves a woman the more he would hate to be like a woman himself. That which we love is not ourselves but our complement — that which has what we have not.’

‘Yes, yes, of course.’

‘So it is with that part of our faith that is taught by the monks. It is for the most part the woman’s half of truth. And men love it as they do women; honour it and keep it and preserve it. What would the world be without it to counterbalance and prevent our virtues becoming our vices?’

‘But yet you think that they do not concern you to keep yourselves.’

The Burman looked surprised. ‘Not so; they do concern me. It is the remembrance and the knowledge of them that makes our men’s qualities virtues. Just as it is the influence of men on women that prevents them becoming frivolous, foolish, vain. A world of

men alone would be a brute's world; a world of monks and women would be ——' he laughed and stopped. 'I don't know why you make me talk,' he said; 'for I do not tell you anything you do not know, or that any one does not know.'

'One may forget. There are many who think and say that whatever you admire you should follow. That truth is truth, and what is truth for one is truth for all.'

The Burman stopped. 'When you can find that,' he said, 'which is the sea, the sky, the air, the earth and all things, in which is King and soldier and monk, which is both man and women, which is the universal, then will it contain all truth and do all things.'

'But we are very small; all we can do is to keep one truth, acknowledging all truths.'

'And yours is to fight?'

'It was. To-day it is to find a place where that which held all that in my life was best may lie — a place where the morning light comes earliest, and the evening glow stays latest.'

He rose and the Englishman rose also. 'I am sorry,' he said.

'No,' and the soldier smiled. 'For sometime soon I too shall go, and if I have kept my truth as she kept hers, then we shall again be one. And one not with each other only, but with all that is true.'

He went away slowly down the hill, walking as though he were very weary. Yet he left an echo in the hills that murmured as he passed. 'If I have kept my truth. My truth.'

He disappeared, and after him the deep and living stillness closed again.

Within the brain of him who stayed there came



thoughts of other days. How in the far West, fifteen centuries ago, knights had gone forth with sword and lance to carry at their point the knowledge of a similar morality. How they had killed in name of mercy, destroyed in the name of hope, fought under the banner of forgiveness of injuries. And they too had felt in some way, some silent way, that though their acts contradicted their words they were not altogether wrong. They bore on their shields a cross, and on their helms a glove, and they conquered in the name of their faith and lady. They professed allegiance to both, they honoured and worshipped both, would give their lives if need be for the one and other. But they did not think it fit for themselves either to follow the Sermon on the Mount or wear a petticoat. They had their truths which they kept, but they were not those they injured by professing in words and denying in conduct.

So it has been both East and West, men have looked at these virtues and loved and honoured them, and said within their hearts, 'They are for women and for monks, who in the main are women. They are for the passive half of human kind. We are the acting half. We are those who do — the good and evil; they are those who suffer — good and evil. We give and they receive. And it would be no more good for the world for us to place these virtues above our own, than for us to become all women.'

It is true that in the East no armies have gone forth to kill and conquer in the name of Buddha, as they have in the name of Christ. [That is because Buddhism is a religion of conduct mainly, whereas in the West Christianity has been of ideals mainly.]

But in both East and West the world is a world of

men and women. In the beginning it was men who were more prominent perhaps, because the main thing to do was fighting, and because women then were much more like men than they are now. The woman of civilisation now is very far from man, in physical qualities, in ideals. But far, far back in the dawn of time, women were much like men. What we call the womanly virtues had not come. No, the first religions were those of men; they honoured fighting, courage, all the manly virtues. Their immortality was children. Why it should be that though women bear the children and love them, and are ready to suffer all for them, the immortality of children should appeal far more to men than women, is hard to see. But it is so, and Judaism and Hinduism are man's religions — the founding of families, of names, of power, all men's ideals — and undeveloped woman had to do her best with them. But there came a time when her ideals grew with her development away from man and they required a faith, so in both East and West it came. Buddhism and Christianity both enshrine in their virtues the ideals of woman, though again that is more noticeable West than East; it governs all its imagery.

— The Church is the 'Bride of Christ,' but no man likes to form part of that which is a bride.

Still, in the East it is clear and unmistakable.

From India Buddhism was driven out by Brahmins, by a caste who wished to corner knowledge, and the women now are shut within the houses; they have no share in the common life, have no part in religion which is the theory of daily life. In Burma women have reached an equality with men in many matters, and Buddhism, the faith of women's virtues, lives and

flourishes. Perhaps it has sometimes been forgotten that it rests on men's virtues as women rest on men. It is in the main women who feed the monks, who build pagodas and rest-houses, and when men do so it is because they honour and love that which in the spirit corresponds to the milder virtues, as in the flesh woman does to man. It is in the main women who find in daily life the opportunity and the need to keep their teachings. And why should it not be so? This is a world of men and women; of men's bodies and strong passions, of women's bodies and weaker passions; and the souls expressed in them must correspond to their differences. For bodies are built up by the energy, which is the spirit, to manifest itself in. You cannot have all the contradictory complementary virtues necessary to humanity in one set of bodies, not bodies as we know them. They have their limit of expression. There must be men and women — many kinds of men and many kinds of women. And the complexity of the whole increases while the capacity of the individual decreases. For early man contained within himself a far larger proportion of the capacities known to him than does any one man now. He could do nearly anything he knew of. He was a fighter, hunter, carpenter, farmer, artist, musician all in one. His wife would fight too and march with him, and was much nearer her husband; she could plant and sow and weave and build and cook. But as life has become more and more complex, men and women have differentiated, sex from sex, man from man, and woman from woman. The greater and more manifold the soul of the world, the more various forms it makes to manifest itself within.

And therefore the more and more necessary it is for each man and woman to realise that their spirits are not little definite unchangeable atoms, always alone, but are part of the great and wonderful life of all the world. Individuals are in the relation to the world about them narrower, smaller, but the life is greater, wider.

The converse also is true, it must be true, just as true as that by merging his individuality in the family, community, nation, the individual grows himself, greater and not less. So civilised man is greater than the savage. Not of far greater possibility only but of far wider reality.

So he sat there thinking, looking on the far-off hills. What he looked for was a new symbol to express that in his mind. And in the silence a bird sang. Out of the hidden hollow of the wood the music rang, note after note, full of the little singer's rapture. Out of the bird's song came to him a symbol.

Life is a melody the Great Musician wrings from out the hearts of men. At first but a few notes; more notes and then more strings sounding in unison. But as the great Composer seeks for greater music, he finds that he must have more instruments. Each heart cannot sound the whole, the scale becomes too great. There must be many different instruments. There must be violins and harps and flutes and trumpets, drums and cymbals; there must be voices, men's and women's: soprano, alto, tenor, bass. So only can you have full harmony. And each must sing and play his part alone, and yet in each must be the music of the whole.

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For each must feel, must know, that he is but a part in a great whole. To him is given his duty, and unless he do it with all his strength, his heart, his soul, the harmony of all will fail. So he must keep his truth, and he must feel within him echoes of all Truth.

So will the orchestra grow greater and the music fuller. For in that music is the voice of every thing that lives, that moves, that is. The sunrise and the sunset and the dark; the hills, the streams, the birds, the beasts; all things that have the breath of life, all men, all women, the voices of all that have been, is, and will be, join in that song. It grows for ever stronger, fuller, sweeter; the discords die; all pain and trouble, tears and sorrow, fall from it till it becomes the great triumphal March of all the world.

Yet because the later truths of Buddhism are made principally of women's truths, it must not be supposed that true Buddhism places them any higher than men's moralities. There is no hierarchy of righteousness. Each is equally true, equally necessary to the whole.

Women are not better than men nor are they worse, but they are different. As the pagoda's golden spire stands upon its base, so women stand upon men's shoulders. They may be the summit and the glory of the nation's life, seen from afar. But the topmost golden tip is no more worthy than the hidden stone within the base.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE PERFECT FELLOWSHIP

THE shadows lengthened tending towards the night: the low sun had no longer strength and brilliance, there was in its light a tenderness and glory. With its touch it called to greater beauty the hills that ringed the valley, the long grassy glades, the winding roads, and shone reflected from the faces of the people. Even the row of square ramshackle hackney carriages that stood waiting for fares lost something of their ugliness. The ponies raised their heads and sniffed the coming coolness of the night, the ragged drivers laughed and talked in quick-flung words from box to box. The golden light took from their wretchedness and poverty, and gave them of its happiness.

The sun sank lower still; it touched the trees upon the western hill, and the long rays uplifted from the earth, spread like a fan between the world and heaven, and with the dusk there came a silence. The chatter of the voices stilled, and one by one the drivers climbed down to the road, and knelt in line, their faces to the sunset.

‘There is no God but God,’ they said; ‘Mahomed was His Prophet.’

They knelt and prayed, while up and down the road the people passed. The carriages raised dust that drifted on them; ponies galloped past them in the grass. Hindus and Buddhists, Europeans, Jews, Par-

sees went by and looked, and then went on. They took no notice. 'God is God; His Prophet was Mahomed.'

Then the prayer said, they rose and went back to their shabby carriages — and the sun had set.

What God is that they called upon, what meaning had their prayer? To the far East 'God' means the God of all things, all men, all life, all worlds. Was this the Allah of their prayers?

Not so. Their Allah was the Semite idea of God, the Jews' idea of God, a different thing. For that God is not the God of all the world, but only a part of it, only of men, only of a part of man.

The Jews' God was a Jewish God who knew not Gentiles. The Allah of the Muslim is a Muslim God who cares for only Muslim people. All other things and men are outcast, Gentile, infidel and damned. They believe the Unity of God! True, but what means the Unity of God? It is a phrase that means so many things — a different thing in different mouths. To Jew and Muslim it means this: that of God, the Infinite, only their tiny finite definition is true; all others are delusions. To their idea the All-Powerful helps but a section of mankind; the All-Merciful has mercy only to few; He who made the world has left the most of His creation to damnation. That is the Semites' God; that is the idea of God that those who follow Semite faiths have borrowed. He is a God of class, of race, of creed — a very narrow Potentate.

That is their prayer, their declaration. 'My God is God; you have no God.'

And yet consider. No one can look upon these men, these poor and ragged rascals praying in the road,

and not see that there is something true and beautiful in what they mean. There is something true to them, that has a meaning more than this. It makes them happier, gives them comfort in their poor lives. God is God. Yes, true. And to half-realise it is better than not to know at all. They have seen a little; they but need to open wider eyes to see more fully. For they are not blind, they see. And they are sure that what they see, so far as they see, is true; that it is good to know that God is God. Neither are they ashamed of it. They would all men should know that they are sure that God cares for the Muslim, and will protect them from the infidel. They are the chosen, and the passers-by are outcasts bound to hell.

Some say Mahomedanism is dead. No one who has seen and understood such sights as this believes that it is so. When men are proud to declare to all the world their faith, that faith is not yet dead. It lives within their hearts; lives by its truth, not by its falsehood.

What is the truth by which this prayer lives? That God has chosen people whom He helps against all others?

That they are bound for heaven, and all the rest for hell?

That there is but one form of truth within the world? None of these things.

And yet there is some truth, some greater and living truth that makes him happier who has said these words. There is some meaning.

God is God, what then?

On the pagoda platform night was falling fast. The golden spire glowed yet with fire caught from the



dying sun, but down below the shrines were wrapped in shadow. About the platform figures moved slowly, sometimes they stopped and knelt and sometimes lit a taper. The tiny flame burned fearlessly in the still air.

They knelt and prayed. They sent their hearts out into space to ask for that they needed sorely. They asked for others, that they might have all that they desire. They asked for self, for peace, for happiness, for love. For they were women.

No sound was heard, but in the stillness sometimes a sigh. Yet all were not sad. Sometimes it was sheer joy and happiness that brought them there. They shared their troubles, brought their burdens; shall they not share their gladness? For life sometimes is good and beautiful. Goodness and glory and happiness come from — who knows from where? They are free gifts. Shall they not give back of their happiness?

Whom do they pray to? 'Buddhism knows no God,' some tell us. No God? Buddhism no God!

Truly it has no God, such as the Semite God who sits apart in heaven; no God who judges men, no God who is a Personality and therefore has His limits. They have no God like this. To them God is in the world, and all our life and soul are rays that come from His refulgence. Shall not the ray that fails call to the sun to strengthen it; shall not the tiny light that dies call to the source of light for help?

No God in Buddhism! There is not anywhere so great a realisation of Infinite God as here.

'Still, man must help himself. He must develop Will; he must alone conquer. How can he cry for help? Is that not weakness?'

Let us consider.

Who are they who pray, who ask for help and gifts? Not men, but women mostly; and for women how different is the world — with what far other eyes they see it.

The world is an oyster and man opens it. It lies before him. With his strength, his knowledge, his roughness, he may do many things. He may win his way to honour, wealth, and happiness; they lie within his possibility.

But women — women; in this hard world what can they reach with their own efforts? Can they go forth and fight? Can they pull down with their own tender hands from off the thorny tree of life its fruits? Can they make wealth, can they make honours; are they the mistresses of their unhappiness? Is even love within their power to seize?

With women all things come to them. Men give them love, men give them happiness; they share their husband's wealth and honour. Women are so helpless in themselves, God gives to them the love of men, and men give them most other worldly things. Man thinks that he achieves what he receives, and it seems that woman gets all things free. She may deserve them but does not achieve them. She cannot pluck her fruit. For though neither are men the arbiters of their destiny, nor more really perhaps than women are, they seem to themselves to be so. They seem to earn, whereas it may be that it is only that men receive direct and women through men. Perhaps the truth is, that neither man nor woman can do more at most than to deserve things. They have no real power to reach, and if they deserve then it is given to them.

However it be, a woman feels her weakness more than man.

Should not she pray? And are her prayers not answered? If you cannot achieve something you greatly desire, if it is quite outside your power, why should not you ask for it, if it be worthy?

No one can say if prayer is answered or is not. The Power from which the soul proceeds can do all things, grant every prayer, or give to none. No one can tell if prayers are answered.

It may be that they are sometimes.

But whether they are or not, the request is not the universal truth of prayer. Maybe there is in it a truth, but not *the* truth. It cannot be so, or we and all of us would spend our time begging for that which we should work for. Will and Knowledge would die, and men become the weakling hangers-on of Providence, contemptible before the world and God. And the worth of prayer would depend on the chance of requests being granted or refused. But this is never so. That woman prays for health for her sick child and she is comforted, aye though the child die.

What then is the truth of prayer?

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Beneath the oleander trees the monks and pupils pray. Along the hills there comes the silver light, foreboder of the dawn. A hush is on the world, and through the silence rise their orisons.

They say that life is transitory, full of pain and trouble. They sing the praise of him who saw the Light. They tell the jewels of their faith. The chanted music rises like a welcome to the day. And they are happy; upon their faces comes a light as on the eastern

sky. What is the secret of their prayer? Is it any help to say that life is troubled; does it give surcease to pain? The Teacher died so many centuries ago, what can his praises do? Is there in holy maxims any shield to save us?

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What is the spirit that lives alike in all these prayers, so different in their form? It is the same in all. You see it in their faces, a courage and a strength. Let us go back to the beginning, to what life is, and what its trouble, then we shall understand.

The root of all our difficulty, of our every pain, is that we are alone. We are so weak, so small, so finite, that the world oppresses us. We stand alone, and about us is an overwhelming power. It passes over us and crushes us without remorse. We cannot help ourselves, and there is no one else to help. And we are pent within ourselves, in such a narrow bound; we stretch our hands to find a fellowship, but meet nothing. We feel that as the world rolls on it may destroy us, not in malice, but in sheer indifference. We may be crushed — and it will make no difference. The world will still go on without us just as well as with us. We do not matter.

We know so little. In our little brains we have such tiny space. The knowledge of the wisest man is but a drop beside the illimitable sea. We do not understand; we walk amid a mystery that holds we know not what of the terrible unknown. We cannot fathom it. We are alone.

We want to love and be loved. We want to feel that we are part of other lives — of greater, wider life; that we are not as drops of water on a thirsty road,

that disappear, no one knows where, but one of a great tide of life that flows, that lives. We feel the utter need of love; we feel the love, we know not where it draws us, nor to what.

Our separateness is the cause of all our trouble, the appalling loneliness, smallness, and weakness of our lives. It terrifies us when we realise it.

Man is drawn into wider organisms, to family, community, and nation, and as the tie is strong, so does his power increase. The many little drops become the mountain rill, and many rills the river. It gives men strength and confidence and courage as they are drawn together. In their cohesion, in their fellowship, there is a solace and a power. A thousand men, what are they worth? A thousand grains of sand. They can do nothing till they feel that they are one, animated by one soul, a regiment and not just so many individuals. The strong man is much stronger, the weak is strong, because each feels that he no longer is alone; he has support. If he succeeds, then all succeed, and if he die, he does not die alone. What one man cannot do, a hundred can working together, and where a hundred fail a nation stands.

Strength, knowledge, courage, all increase as men grow into wider organisms. And more. For what is duty? Our duty to our family, our community, our class, our nation, is the expression of the feeling that we are one. It then becomes clear to us. Duty is not a set of maxims or of rules. It is a sense of oneness; and with that larger 'oneness' comes the knowledge of what is right and wrong as regards it. We are not units separate for ever, but parts of wider organisms. We are not shifting grains of sand, but

particles in stones built into spires that rise ever towards heaven.

Thus from the buffets of the world we find a firm support; we have a refuge and a consolation. We feel the strength of fellowship. If all our troubles were but worldly ones it were enough. But we need more. What can our people, no matter how near, how true, help us in many losses? Our nearest pass from us, we drift when we are old from out the nation's tide; and we have enemies within ourselves against which we need an inner help. At last we die, and pass from all that we have known. They cannot help us whatever they do. We need a nearer, closer friend — closer than wife or husband, a friend who goes on for ever, who is ourselves. We want that inward light that never dies. We want a greater unity than nature or humanity; to feel at one with that which never dies or changes. So only can we be sure that we shall never be forgotten, never be cast aside and left beside the way.

That is the soul of prayer.

No matter what the form, that is the spirit that makes it live. That is the truth that lies in every prayer: the Muslim beggar crying 'Allah, Allah'; the woman asking for a boon; the monks, the boys repeating aspirations. When a prayer is true that is its truth. To feel that we are part of the Eternal Sun; that all we are comes from it, is a ray of its celestial glory.

We cannot be forgotten. In the great white light is every ray. We must be there, or it will not be perfect. Without our tiny, tiny light the Light would be imperfect; without our little soul, the Soul would not be infinite. It is the Perfect Fellowship with all

the Universe. Not ourselves only, but all others. The mother prays beside her dying child. The child will leave her going forth all lonely to the dark. A fear is in her for it and a terrible compassion. It is so weak, and there is no one, no one in that dark to which it goes.

— Not so. There is no dark. The little soul is safe, for it is part of God; do you think He cares not for His own? In the great white light all souls shall meet, be one — be One.

See how the Eastern understanding of what life is explains so many things. If you take men's souls as little separate entities for ever how will you get the explanation? If you take God as a Great Personality outside this world, how will you understand? A Personality is a limitation, it has bounds, it is a definition. Therefore the West has said that Buddhism knows no God because it will not speak of persons.

The simple village folk speak of the Great Spirit that lives in heaven, of the little gods who are in every living thing, because they cannot rise to higher conception, and it is better so to personify than to have no idea at all. But the Teacher never spoke thus because though it would embrace a truth, it would embrace also a misconception. And it may happen that the misconception in time destroys the truth, that men see only the limitation of the symbol.

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'He is unknown to whoso think they know, but known to whoso know Him not.'

## CHAPTER XX

### HELL AND HEAVEN

THEN what is heaven and what is hell? or is there any heaven and any hell? That there is, without this world, some place apart where souls are set to suffer cannot be, nor can there be a golden place beyond the stars where we shall sit in glory and in idleness. Because such ideas come from thinking the soul is a separate substance, so to remain for ever, and the central thought of Buddhism is that all life is one. Yet men must suffer for their sins, and they must reap reward when they do well.

Among the simple village folk there is a hell in all respects the same as that the West believes in. They speak about it, they make pictures of it. In a pagoda chapel near the river is such a set of pictures. It was a little place of brick and mortar, square with four large doorways.

There was a wealth of plaster scroll-work round the doors and in the crevices, and from the scrolls there looked forth masks of men and devils quaintly done.

Within were frescoes on the walls, the central pier and on the ceiling — pictures of hell.

Men were shown there under all forms of suffering, burnt with fires by demons, who piled up the coals; and some were flayed alive and torn asunder. Dead corpses drifted in a river with carrion birds perched on them; there were giant worms that ate their entrails.



And in every picture there were monks who looked with piteous faces. But they were powerless to save. Each man must bear his punishment and dree his weird. They reaped but as they sowed.

And as he looked there came remembrance of pictures elsewhere, of tales, of poems in other lands, all of this same ideal. There was the *danse macabre* upon a bridge, and many a picture of mediæval Italy and Germany. There were engravings of old books. There was the 'Hell' of Dante, and there were sermons old and new, threatening the sinner with unheard of pains.

Some people say the East and West are different fundamentally. That is not so. The truths both East and West see are the same, and very often they see them from the same standpoint and use the same expressions. This was the Christian hell, the Pagan hell, and it was painted in a Buddhist shrine.

What did it mean? Why was it there? What Buddhist truth could it convey? That there was a hell where men were sent to suffer, somewhere beyond this world? That cannot be. The meaning is very different. It was this:

We are made up of souls within our bodies, of spirit manifested in flesh. Our bodies have passions, many passions, contradictory. The soul is made up of Knowledge and of Will, and it controls the passions, can control them, should control them, if it did its duty, if Will and Knowledge both were cultivated as they should be. But they are not. Man remains ignorant and weak, and lets his passion or his want of passion — his weakness — control him instead of his controlling them and using them right. He is a slave who should

be master; he obeys others who should obey himself; he follows meteors instead of cultivating the clear light within.

Therefore he suffers, and must suffer, now and hereafter. But he must suffer in the flesh, because it is in the flesh he sinned; because in the flesh, in the lower life alone, sensation lies. He must be paid in the same coin he paid withal. In his children or in some future flesh he must learn better. We are now what we made ourselves; we will be what we make ourselves.

When men die everything passes but the effect of that which they have done. That is a Buddhist saying. It does not mean, as it is misunderstood to mean, that when men die they disappear utterly, and that all that is left is the effect of their deeds upon the outer world. We are not concerned here with the outer world but with the inner life.

When a man dies his life may survive, his soul persists. In children may his life continue; and they in their bodies inherit the effect of some of their parents' deeds.

The soul survives, and that in itself is greater or less as it has been cultivated in this life. But the soul in its further journeys does not carry with it attributes of the bodily life. It has no memory — why should it treasure up remembrance of the past? It has within itself the effects, and that is more than any memory. It leaves behind the loves and hates and hopes and fears of life. In any future phase allied again to life and body it will assume with them these attributes. But they will be new ones, not brought with the soul. At death the duality of that body and that soul is divorced for ever. Each takes his burden forward but with new

companions. Each will reap what it has sown. But in soul apart from life there is no bodily attribute.

Pain and sorrow and trouble are of the flesh, not of the spirit. Therefore do their hells seem true. Their suffering is corporeal, and that is what all suffering is. But it is not endured in some far distant hell — their hell is here. We can make earth a hell, and do so.

So men by drawing punishment and hell in bodily terms of suffering are doing what is recognised in all time by all mankind. Pictures of hell and tales of hell seem true; we are afraid of them, they strike a chord that echoes. And man has many object lessons from which to draw; no imagined hell is half so hellish as man has made this world sometimes. The artist of hell can be a realist and draw from nature. He did so. We used to hang and quarter, torture, burn, enslave; we do not do these things now. Yet he who would draw a hell to-day would not have to look far for models. Some men like hell, to make and think of — hell for others. As for ourselves we all want heaven, and think that we deserve it, though we do not know what it consists in. Hell we know, for pain is of the body, of this earth; it comes from febleness of soul, that is of knowledge and of will. The world is not an evil thing, nor is the body which is made of earth. They may be beautiful. The passions are noble and great when they are directed by knowledge, ruled by will. But sin is hideous, and sin is the chaos of the passions, the perversion of good things, truths allowed to run to falsehood.

Hell is upon earth and heaven may be. Hell is of the body and of now. It is not kept till we are dead

to make us suffer uselessly elsewhere. Fear made that hell, not God.

Therefore the Buddhist monks allow these pictures, because they teach that which they think a truth.

But what of heaven?

Here are no pictures of a heaven. Where are there any, either in paint or words, that bring conviction, that cause other than revulsion? Not East nor West.

Dante's *Inferno*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and many a tale of hell we read and feel and fear. But Dante's *Paradiso*, Milton's *Paradise Regained*, and many tales of heaven we leave unread. They are not real; they do not please; they have no echo. Or would we make our heavens by picturing the pleasures of this world, eating and drinking, the love of exercise, of work, of beauty or of women? Would we make our paradise that of the Muslims where there are houris waiting for the happy warrior? Women would have celestial lovers also without doubt.

Yet bodily pleasures are good things in their place; they are pleasant things, never to be despised. But heaven!

Does not the inward light declare to us that heaven is very different? There are no material images in which to picture our hopes of heaven.

How could we picture heaven, for heaven is of the soul, and can we make a drawing or confine within a phrase the spirit? Take the very simplest forces that we know, gravity or heat, can we picture them? We can only draw or speak or even think of the material manifestation in which they show themselves.

And if not simple forces, can we draw knowledge or will? Can we ever draw happiness or gladness?

Have we any words in which to make them clear? The greatest writers can call up before us tragedy, sorrow and suffering, but the glory of happiness escapes them. We have a word which shows we recognise that it is of the spirit — we speak of 'ecstasy,' a standing without ourselves.

Happiness is not a thing apart. It is a quality of Knowledge and of Will; it is the light that shines from them. Happiness is to know and to be able to do that which is right. As they grow wider it grows deeper, stronger.

Heaven is the broader life. It is the gathering of the rays of our souls, ourselves, that which is good in us, that which endures. Evil is temporary, of the body. Hell is but for time, but heaven is eternal.

Hell is of the little personality in changing form, heaven is of the spirit that is in all the worlds. It is the meeting of our little souls with others, with all that is best, most true, most beautiful in them. To be one with them as we can never be where shells of earth divide us. It is to be one with all the beauty of the world, with the sunshine on the hills, the majesty of the night, the laughter of the waters; with the nobility of noble deeds; the souls of all whom we have loved; with the great Power which is all life.

Such is Nirvana.

That is what you get when you see life as a spirit, not a substance separate for ever.

About the platforms and the shrines there stood the little alabaster images of Him who saw the light. Quaint little figures were they. Carved in the three traditional attitudes alone — standing, sitting, reclin-

ing — they seemed always at peace in the dignity of infinite understanding. He died twenty-five centuries ago, and was buried in Upper India, and the other day they found his bones.

Think of it — after two thousand and five hundred years they found untouched the mortal remains of him who first in the world's history taught the crowning virtues, discerning them, as Newton did the laws of gravity, by sight and thought. These relics are now safe and treasured as men might treasure the bones of Darwin, who showed to the world the way the body grew. They work no miracles, they have no virtues, only they recall the knowledge that he found. And stranger yet it is to think that if there had been no grave, no relics, even if it could be shown that Buddha the Indian Prince never existed, was but a myth, a story, it would make no real difference. For it is not to be supposed that because Buddhists reverence the memory of the Teacher, give his name to their religion, and place his statues on their pagodas, that they consider in all matters his life to be an example to mankind. He was a prince — few men are that; he left his power and the duties of his position to seek for knowledge — it would not become all men so to act. For most it probably is better to do that which comes to hand. He finally became a Teacher, going to and fro to explain what he had found. But the world cannot be made of Teachers. Every man has his own light to keep burning. The world is various; all men are different one from another. To take an example of the life of even the wisest, greatest man, and hold it up as universal, would be to attempt the old mistake, to imagine that there is one fixed thing which is best. It

would be a sorry world that held men all of one kind, even if that kind appear the highest we have seen. It would be to deny the essential of the teaching. To admire, to understand, to reverence is not to imitate. Men admire and love their women, he is a poor man who takes them for his standard. Women love men, but do not imitate them. Most men and women love children, but do not wish to adopt childish natures.

Each man is given his own truth to keep, and that will differ always in some greater or lesser manner from all else. The Buddha had his truth — to find some of the laws of life. This truth he followed to the end. It is for others to follow their own truths with like simplicity and steadfastness. In that way only does the example always hold.

Therefore the reverence is for the teaching, not for the teacher. If Buddha were all forgotten, such of his teachings as are true would last; they would not suffer.

If in years to come men forget Galileo, Newton, Darwin, and their names be buried in oblivion, how would it alter truth? The knowledge of things would still remain. All men would know that the earth goes round the sun, that gravity and light have certain laws, that man's body has grown up from the simplest monad, because they can see, and in case of doubt they can test these theories and see their truth. We do not believe the earth goes round the sun because Galileo said so, we know it is so. Even if it were shown for certain that there was never Siddartha an Indian prince, though many beautiful things would disappear from Buddhism, the essentials would remain. Because it is the science of the evolution of man's life and soul, which men can test for themselves and see the truth. And if as the

years go on new truths come into sight, they can be added to the old. For it is progressive and not fixed and finite. It is a ladder reaching always upwards. It is a science men may work at always, striving after new truths as the world grows wider. For it must be remembered that it has at present progressed little beyond where it was after the death of the immediate disciples of the Buddha. At the best it has stopped very much where they left it; at the worst it has become so degraded as hardly to be recognised. And this people who now hold and keep it, find the old images and manner fit them because they are in much the same stage of development as the people of Siddhartha's days. But what is true is not bound by any mode of expression. The truest expression is not the oldest nor the nearest to that far-off Indian Teacher, but it is that which will to each civilisation and each race best express the truths of life which he first indicated, best give them utterance, and best help their further development. Evolution, the rising from lower to higher planes, is as true of truth as of matter or of life.

There is nothing in this faith stereotyped for ever, nothing to be accepted, because some one has said it or dreamed it or prophesied it. If there be anything untrue it were better out of it, and all new truths must be added to it. Yet it must be remembered that the new stands always on the old, and when old is true and new is true the edifice lasts for ever.



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE UNDERSTANDING DREAM

ON one hot-weather night they gave a play. There was a piece of open ground that lay not far beyond the village. One side lay on the river and on the other stood great tamarind trees. The moon was high and made the open ground as white as if snow lay upon it, while the shadows round were black as ebony. This was their theatre; upon one side they made a stage by spreading mats upon the ground and standing in the centre of them a tall plantain tree. Behind it was the orchestra of two-stringed violins and flutes and gongs and drums; oil cressets hung on poles made light, and could any prima donna wish a quieter, sweeter green-room wherein to beautify herself than that which lay within the shelter of the trees?

The people came in numbers, all the folk who lived near by, and many from far away. The creaking ox-carts brought them along the sandy lanes, and across the river came boats like black arrows shooting over the shining water.

The audience made a great horse-shoe about the stage. In front were children of all ages, from tiny creatures of two or three years upwards, next were girls and women, and behind them standing against the tree-trunks were the men.

The players were all children — sons and daughters of the village, taught through many weeks for this great

event. So they played well, because they had learnt well and because they were not afraid. For were not the audience all their friends: their fathers, mothers, neighbours, and their lovers? All were there to see and hear them act. And the play was one well known: a miracle play from long ago, that all had learnt as children, that no one grew tired of even when he grew old. This was the play: —

There lived in that far-off golden time, in his kingdom near the northern hills, a Prince Wethandaya. He had a Princess Madee and two children, boy and girl. His country was rich and prosperous and all things there went well, for the people were industrious and brave, the Prince wise and pious, and they had that sacred animal a white elephant, whose possession ensured good seasons. But on the neighbouring state a famine fell. The rains came not, the crops all failed, and the starving people came before the King. ‘Help us,’ they cried, ‘or we shall die. The rains come not, the earth is bare. You are our King to whom we look!’

He sought his Council, and they told that there was but one way to bring the rain. Nothing had any power but a white elephant — one must be brought within the city. Then the rain would fall and all be well. ‘To say is easy,’ said the King, ‘but words are only words. Where are white elephants to be obtained? The country where they live is very distant. It would take years to send there, and the people would be dead.’

The Council answered that was so. But still there was hope; for the neighbouring Prince Wethandaya had a white elephant, and if the Prince would give it

all would be well. The Prince too would be sure to give it, for he was famed for his charity, and denied nothing to those who asked: his eyes, his heart, he would give anything.

So eight Brahmins were sent to ask for the white elephant. They travelled fast, and came at length to the Prince and asked him for the gift.

The Prince was willing, but the Council and the people murmured. 'Why should we give what makes our peace and happiness? What is it to us that another people suffer? If we give away this elephant shall we not suffer in our turn? Will not the famine come to us?'

Even the Princess shook her head and said it was a pity. But the Prince was firm. 'Shall we not give,' he said, 'when we are asked? Shall we not save when it is in our power? Stay till to-morrow and then take the elephant.'

And to his Queen he said:—

'Madee, you have great treasure. You have your dower, and I have given you many things besides. Bethink you, were it not good to make a treasure-house to keep it in for ever?'

'For why?' asked the astonished Queen. 'We shall not live for ever to enjoy it, and how and where can such a treasure-house be built?'

'The treasure-chamber,' said the Prince, 'that will endure is shrined within ourselves. It moves for ever with us as a shadow followeth a man. It came from all the past and goes to all the future. It is ourselves, and in that chamber there is no treasure like to charity. Would you reject that treasure when it comes to seek you?'

The Princess said no more, and next day after a great feast the Brahmins led away the sacred beast.

But unlike the Princess, the Ministers and the people were not convinced. They murmured, and at last they rose and drove the Prince forth to banishment. They gave him a chariot and horses, and as much gold and jewels as he wished, and taking him to the frontier bade him never return again. So they drove out along the unpeopled ways — the Prince, his wife and children. But a travelling Brahmin begged from him his horses, and when four deer came and drew it he gave away the chariot to another. His gold and jewels all were given, and then destitute of all possessions the four continued on foot.

They travelled on and on; they passed the hill of flowers, the valley of cool shade, the pleasant waters, till at last they came to the high mountains far from all the world. They found a cave and made therein their habitation, and every day Madee went forth and gathered fruits and roots for all to live on. So time passed happily and quietly and then came the final consummation.

A Brahmin came and asked for the two children. He found the Prince sitting alone within his cave, and because the Prince could refuse nothing he gave the children. But the mountain spirits kept back Madee in the woods, setting a leopard and a tiger in her path. For though the Prince might give, the Princess never would have done so. But she returned too late; boy and girl were gone.

The audience burst into tears of sympathy and grief.

Then, finally, the gods sent another Brahmin to demand of the Prince his wife, Madee the beautiful

and faithful, and he gave her. The sacrifice was consummated, and he remained alone and destitute. He had followed Charity to her end, he had conquered self, and because he had so conquered, the gods returned to him all that he had lost. The Princess, children, kingdom, all were given back.

So the play ended happily.

With a great sigh the crowd broke up. The people went slowly towards their homes, the boats put forth again upon the river, and in a little while the place was empty and alone. But in the heavens the moon shone high, filling the world with mystery and peace, and down below, beside the passing waters, three men talked.

‘It is a play,’ said one, ‘to make one think. What is its meaning? What did those who wrote it wish to say; what was it that they said?’

To which another answered: ‘They meant to say that charity was a great thing, especially to Brahmins; that it brought its own reward to those who gave — to Brahmins.’

‘True, that is so; this is a Hindu legend from before the time of Buddha. It is a Brahmin tale, and that is what they meant to say. But is it what they said?’

‘I think,’ said one who sat low down and listened to the ripples going past, ‘that what it says is otherwise. What did the audience to-night think when the Brahmin took the children? Was it reverence for the Brahmin or the Prince that they felt, or was it not contempt? They hissed. A virtue narrowed to become a virtue to a class, a caste, a church, becomes a vice. Charity is to all mankind.’

‘But I suppose,’ the other answered, ‘that they

would argue that charity is good or not according to the object, and that no object can be so good as a caste which cultivates knowledge, or a church which cultivates holiness.'

'It is of course true that the value of charity depends also upon the object, but it was to escape the result of such a teaching driven to an extreme that Buddhism came to protest. It protested not in theory but in practice. The Buddhist monks are not allowed to beg, and they are allowed to receive only the necessaries of life. Thus they can never become a temporal power, a tyranny, a standing denial of their own tenets, as have become the Brahmins in India and the Churches of the West. That is one unconscious lesson of the story, a lesson that they who hear it note. It was written to extol the giving of all things to the Brahmins, and it unconsciously condemns them.'

'Neither was the sympathy of the people with the Prince. No; for he gave that which he had no right to give — the prosperity of the people, his children, which were the mother's as well as his. He owed them a duty to bring them up well and wisely, not to give them away to a beggar who maltreated them. That is what the people like in the play, the human interest.'

The man beside the river dipped his fingers in the water. 'It is for that, because it touches their heart, but more, I think, because it has in it a lesson, an unconscious lesson, that is indeed the heart of their religion.'

The others listened. 'And that?' asked one.

'It is that we never see truth whole. It is that we can never find a virtue we can follow with our eyes tight shut; it is that there is never any rule or rules that lead to righteousness. Yet that is always what

man seeks. "Show me the truth," he cries, "that I may follow it." The castes and churches and philosophers lay down the virtues and say, "Follow these; here only is the Truth, the way to heaven, to rest, to peace." But the people clearly see that it is never so. These rules and virtues are sometimes a truth and sometimes not. Sometimes the living light of truth is in them, and sometimes they are dead. Pilate asked What is truth, as many more have done, and got no answer. There is no answer, not in the way he meant: a maxim, or a set of teachings, a code, a moral guide. For every virtue has its other side and may become a vice. As see this Prince. Charity is a virtue, no one doubts it, one of the most beautiful, — when truth is in it. But when it is not?

'That is what Buddhism came to show. That we never see truth whole; that if what we see were always true then we should be no better than machines. Could we find out a code that held invariably true we should have but to learn it, then to shut our eyes and follow it. Our minds, free will, consciences would die. We should be as engines running on rails we may not leave. But the end and object of our lives is not to make ourselves cold, dead, and soulless things, automata that jerk always in given fashion. It is to learn knowledge; it is to recognise amid all the varying, and to all seeming, contradictory forms of what may be truth, that which in the time and place is *True*. It is to cultivate our consciences, our minds, our common sense. It is to cultivate our will to do that which is right when we see it. We are not slaves of other men, of castes, of churches, nor of words, of rules, of maxims or philosophies. We are free men — to grow ever freer, ever

wiser, ever into greater self-control. That is what Buddha meant, and because the people know that, because in this story they see how quickly any virtue may become a vice when used without knowledge and self-restraint, that it appeals to them.'

The listeners understood. For in the majesty of the night, in the watching stars, in the ever-flowing river there was an echo to the words, 'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control'; and in self is the whole world.

There was a long silence and the summer night passed on.

'So what seems wrong may sometimes be right,' said one at last. 'Our object is self-knowledge and control; that only which he does of his own free will raises him or degrades him. It is better for him to do wrong and find out his mistake than to do right on compulsion, is not that so? and yet could the world progress with that always as a truth? There must be government. What would the world be like with anarchy?'

To which was answered: 'It is a question of ideals. What they mean is that the fact that government is necessary is a sign of our weakness, that compulsion is a lesser evil to avoid a greater. It is not in itself an end to aim at; complete knowledge and complete free will are the ideals, and whatever impedes the progress thither does harm. Government has two meanings. In so far as it is the expression of the larger life, the free will of a people combining to effect what is beyond the power of individuals it is all good. Government meaning compulsion is an evil, though in times and places a necessary evil. It is like leading-



strings to a child: they help him to walk, but they are not good things in themselves. They are not an ideal to aim at, but an evil to be endured to avoid a greater, and to be done away with as soon as possible. A child if he is ever to be a man must learn to walk alone. Man must learn to choose the good without being forced. It is the same with war; it is an evil. But as the world is now, it is the sole escape from greater evils. It is war alone which from time to time proves men and nations. It is the fire from which the gold comes out the purer. This world grows many weeds; there are gangrenes that eat into the living flesh. The surgeon's knife is evil, maybe, but it saves the life. The healthy man fears not the surgeon's knife. When men are grown so that they need not war, then will it cease. When men can walk alone then will the leading-strings of government, of law, of justice all fall off. Till then we choose the lesser evil lest the greater kill us. But we must remember they are means, not ends.'

'If,' said the first man sadly, 'life were always a choice between a good and an evil, how simple it would be. But it is not so. Life is seldom a choice between a good and an evil, still less often between two good things, but usually between two evils. A man may be so placed that he must do evil — often is so placed. It is an evil to have to use outside support; it may be a greater evil never to learn to walk, to become discouraged by many falls and so remain prone. It is always a choice, and daily the choice is harder.'

'But as man chooses the lesser evil, or the greater good so does he rise.'

'What then is truth?'

The man beside the water raised a pebble in his hand. 'This is a little thing,' he said; 'a very finite stone. Yet of this stone no one can see more than one side at once. The rest is turned away. It faces north and south, to earth and heaven, to sunrise and to sunset, but only one face is true to me now.' He laid it down upon the river beach between them. 'I see one face and you another; each is a contradiction of the other. Yet had not each side its opposite there could be no stone. So is it even with the tiniest truth. It has its opposite. And truth is infinite. How could we see it whole? In some world of a fourth dimension — Yes, but here — No.'

'Yet,' said the other man, 'that is only half a truth, because within our finite lives it may be that we never have occasion to see but one side of a certain truth. The other may never be turned to us. It is an evil thing to tell a lie, and yet it may be, yet it is sometimes, to some men the only escape from some far greater evil. Those are the two facets. But to most it may happen that the latter contingency may never come, and therefore to them one face becomes almost the absolute.'

'If in the things of every day we had to stop each moment to consider what is right and wrong, no day would be long enough to do our work in. We must have general rules, but we must remember that they are not the Truth, and there may come a time when we shall have to face the difficulty.'

'There is "the golden mean,"' one asked again, 'the proverb that we go most safely in the middle?'

'A coward's maxim,' cried the man below, 'to halve each virtue and each evil. That is not a truth except

for him who fears, and he who desires to progress must not fear. There are times when the extreme is true, when a man must go to any limit for that he thinks right.'

And again he questioned, 'Does it not happen that sometimes a man will endure even to the end for a thing which is not true, which he thinks is true only because his eyes are blind? And yet to him it may be counted as a righteousness.'

'It must be true to him, and that is all that matters.'

'Yet again we come to the question that is never answered: "What is truth, and how can we ever know a thing is true?"'

The night was very still. Orion hung his jewels high above them in the sky. A light mist lay along the river, and beneath its veil the polished waters moved. It seemed the night was listening. 'How shall we know the truth?'

'Listen,' he answered. 'Here is an answer that was given nearly three thousand years ago, many centuries before the Buddha was, to one who asked that question, and we have not bettered it.'

"What light hath this Man-Soul?" the King asked.

"Sun's light, O King," said he; "'tis with the sun for light that he sitteth, goeth about, doeth his work, cometh back."

"Verily it is so. When the sun hath gone down what light hath this Man-Soul?"

"Moon's light, O King," said he; "'tis with the moon for light that he sitteth, goeth about, doeth his work, cometh back."

"Verily it is so. When the sun hath gone down,

and the moon hath gone down, what light hath this Man-Soul?"

"Fire's light, O King," said he; "'tis with fire for light he sitteth, goeth about, doeth his work, and cometh back."

"Verily it is so. When the sun hath gone down, when the moon hath gone down, when the fire is dead, what light hath this Man-Soul?"

"Voice light, O King," said he; "'tis with the Voice for light that he sitteth, goeth about, doeth his work, cometh back. Therefore where a voice is uplifted thither he goeth, albeit he cannot behold there his own hand."

"Verily it is so. When the sun hath gone down, when the moon hath gone down, when the fire is dead, when the voice is hushed, what light hath this Man-Soul?"

"The light of Self, O King," said he; "'tis with Self for light that he sitteth, goeth about, doeth his work, cometh back."

"What is Self?"

"It is the Man-Soul made of understanding between the Breaths; the Inward Light within the heart that walketh abroad ever the same through both worlds. . . . He becometh an Understanding Dream and fareth beyond this world."

\* \* \* \* \*

While the teacher lives, he who comes into the world from time to time and sees the light, men walk by him.

When he is dead they walk in the reflected light his disciples give.

When they are gone men fall again to the light of daily experience.

And when that dies, choked in its ashes, they listen hither and thither to this advice and that.

Until at last they learn that the only true light is that ray of the infinite in themselves.

For if men look within themselves they will find always light enough to guide their steps forward, and that light never dies but grows for ever.

That was the ideal of wise men of the East: to be the 'Understanding Dream,' the perfection of all knowledge; to increase the ray of conscious understanding that is within all men. To it alone is given to know where Truth is. For Truth is not a thing. It is like Life — a force, an energy, a ray of the eternal light. And it is manifested in all forms: it comes into a phrase, a saying, a teaching, a rule, an act, a life, and while the Truth is in it then it lives, and when the Truth departs it falls an empty shell, a form devoid of soul.

But Soul knows Soul and Truth has answer unto Truth, and it is by that Truth within ourselves that we shall know the Truth in all things.

\* \* \* \* \*

The night was nearly past, and in the east there came the silver light, the herald of the dawn. The river drew her mists yet closer to her.

## CHAPTER XXII

### ALL TRUTH IS ONE

IT was his last day in the monastery, and he sat thinking over all that he had seen and thought. He looked on the bare walls, the matted floor, the simple surroundings where he had been so happy, where strength and health and understanding had come to him. He looked out on the broad view, the hills, the fields, the river that had spoken to him so often, on the sunlight that lit the world. Then he took down the prism of glass that had given him his symbol, that had helped him to understand. I will keep it, he thought, in memory of this Eastern faith. And yet what is there Eastern in it? There are Western people who pretend that Eastern people differ from them, that they have Oriental modes of thought, of life. They think that Eastern faiths have something in them strange, unnatural to Western faith; that Eastern thought is a thing no Western can understand, that it is mystical and subtle — incomprehensible. But that is not so. Eastern thought and Western thought are just the same, and Eastern truth and Western truth is but one truth. Life is all one though it manifests itself in many forms, and so it is with thought. The difference is in the form, the symbol only. If you can get below that; if you have not shut the portals of your mind and said, 'I do not understand and therefore cannot'; if you have not shut your eyes deliberately be-

cause you do not want to see, but keep them open, then you will see below the form to what it is that makes it live, and the life is a common life to all the world. What is there in this Eastern faith that all mankind has not seen at one time or another? That all the world is God's, that it is beautiful, that the life in it is one with our life, — is that not known to the West? All people have known, all people know it naturally, until the knowledge is murdered in their hearts by dogma and authority for their own ends.

The earth is beautiful; it is for us to keep it and to make it more so. Did not the Greeks know it; has not every people been sure of it? Has not the truth of this surged upward, bursting through dogma? Even in the deadly years of mediævalism, even in monks, this truth could never be repressed. Was it an Oriental who wrote 'The earth is the living garment of God'? Was Wordsworth some subtle Oriental when he wrote the verse placed as a heading to Chapter IV? That is an universal thought that comes to every one who lives near nature.

So with the life before this life, what is there Eastern in that? All the world naturally knows it, that we did not begin at birth.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.

Men have always known it till it was crushed in them. They know it even still, the truth does not die. It will rise again, must rise and burst the tombstones placed on it to keep it down.

That God is Love? All the world is always saying it, but only in the similes of this Eastern faith can it be understood how it may be. Because man grows by attraction of particle to particle, of man to man, of soul to soul, to wider life, and that is love.

That we can never see right or wrong whole, but only facets, and the facets alter, and show differently to different men?

For this is truth to me and that to thee.

Tennyson was no Oriental.

It would be easy to fill a library with such quotations on this and other points. Men have recognised always when allowed to think for themselves that no fixed maxims are always true or could be always true. We have to choose, to cultivate knowledge and free will.

And of the Inward Light has not the West been told, does it not know when the Churches let it, that 'the kingdom of heaven is within you'? That is the only light which lives and grows, because it is a ray of the infinite.

An Eastern faith? An universal faith made up of truths common to all mankind. Yet though it is known to all, and seen by all men at all times in parts and glimpses, only Two have seen it whole. They saw it and they told it, but men did not understand. What is the history?

Twenty-five centuries ago the light was seen in India. It shone for a time and died. Men understood it not. They were filled with admiration of the further truths that Buddha saw, and they forgot the earlier truths on which these rested. The personality of the



Teacher dominated them. They thought that what he taught was the whole truth. When he said that what troubled us was life, they thought he meant the fact of being alive, whereas he only meant the present limited conditions in which we live. They thought his ideal was Death, yet it was Life. They thought that because he taught renunciation of many things that renunciation was a complete truth for always, whereas it is but a later truth. That because he did not teach worldly wisdom that therefore worldly wisdom was a worthless thing and ignorance a good. Human society rests on certain laws, certain ideals; they thought he came to deny them; he came to build upon them.

He gave utterance to certain maxims, and they thought that by following these alone you could come to happiness. It is much easier to do so, to follow a certain rule blindly instead of cultivating knowledge, to make oneself a slave instead of being free. They took a half-truth and made a falsehood of it. They built the spire while the foundations crumbled.

And again there was a class of men, a caste, a race who hated what he taught. Wisdom had been theirs, they had made a monopoly of it. They claimed the reverence of all other men because of their knowledge and understanding. They denied to other men all possibility of righteousness. They made a corner.

The Buddha taught that in each man if he but look there is a light whereby he may see, a ray of the eternal light, and that it is within each man's power to increase that light — within his power alone. None else can save him but himself. Man may be helped to find himself, but others cannot do it for him. This race of Brahmins arrogated to themselves the salvation not

only of themselves but others. They were the elect. They had the monopoly: no one could find salvation but in them, buy it except from them. They wanted power, authority, and reverence. They desired to rule the hearts of men. They wanted not to teach, but order; not to raise, but crush. Free trade in righteousness was an abomination to them. They held the keys of heaven and hell.

So because Buddhism ceased to be truth it fell. The Brahmins drove it out, and made in India a great 'trust' of righteousness which lasts there still. Yet because they kept free of the desire for worldly power, apart from spiritual, the people did not rise against them. Their yoke was not so hard, and they had a truth — the earlier truths of love and marriage, and immortality, of wider knowledge. In spiritual matters men like to be ruled, to be commanded, to be forced, to surrender all their will. It is so much easier, so much simpler; nothing is so hard as an attempt to think.

Only in Burma did the faith survive in somewhat of its early form. Because the sheltering mountains and the sea saved them from Brahmin overlordship, and because they were in all essentials a free people, equal and happy.

Yet here too the pinnacle was seen more than the base. The lesser truths were neglected and the summit sometimes shook. They did not see life whole.

Such is the history of the East, and does the West differ? Six hundred years later came another who saw the light, saw it much as the earlier teacher did. There is not in the Christianity of Christ very real difference from the teachings of Buddhism. The

similes, the colour, the local circumstances differ, but the essentials are the same.

And the West did not understand it. They did much as the East had done. They did not realise that He came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law, the prophets; not to destroy the earlier truths, but add to them. They hung about that figure trappings of miracle and mystery. Then like the East they formed a 'trust.' It was not a caste or race this time so much as a hierarchy, and yet there was a race in it too, a holy city and a race from whom the higher priests all came.

They made a church and out of that church a trust. That which was free to all men was cornered. Salvation was of the Church alone, and it might give or it might deny. It might send men to heaven or hell. 'The kingdom of heaven is within you,' said the Teacher. 'Not so,' said the Church. 'It is in the priest. We have the keys of heaven and will let you in, or will deny you.' They claimed all authority, spiritual, temporal, all. Men were to be their slaves. They tried to establish an absolute tyranny in everything and they killed truth. They wanted to extinguish in every heart the Light which God put there for men to see by, so that the world might be lit by their light alone. They who should have shown the way by going in front to lead all men into freedom, became the drivers into a slavery. Every strengthening truth they killed, and they left but soothing opiates to dull their slaves and make them blind. They made them dream dreams, see visions, anything but reality.

There came a revolution against the race, the Church. The other races would no longer be domineered over

and ruled. They made their churches for themselves. What did they found them on?

A book.

They took a book and set it up and worshipped it. The book is very old. There was truth in it, there is still when it is understood, but the imagery is that of other lands and other times. Sometimes the truth remains clear, oftener the words remain a lifeless shell, and we do not know what the truth was that illumined them.

'The letter killeth.' Therefore they took the letter and worshipped it. They made themselves a tyranny worse even than the tyranny of other men. They made, too, a tyranny of men who gave interpretations to the book. They bound themselves hand and foot, they who should be free men. Of a book they made their teacher, and they put out the inward light.

Truth is progressive, and they stopped it where it had reached nineteen hundred years ago. But when you stop a life it dies. The spirit goes out of it. Saying they wished to preserve truth, they killed it and preserved but the petrified form.

Two thousand and five hundred years ago was laid and made clear the foundation of all truth. Did men build on the foundations given to them, increase the structure, make more beautiful? Not so. They set to work to deface and pull it down. And so now we have got to clear away all the rubbish, and bare the old truths again before we can continue our own building. For we have gone far since then. We have progressed in many ways, and we want wider truth now than that which then was shown. We want to see life more clearly still than it was then seen; to bring new truths

we dimly guess into the whole; to understand their place in reference to the others.

And we want old truths new stated; we want new similes. For much of the difficulty lies in the simile. In those far-off days men knew only substance. They could not realise energy apart from that in which it existed, or rather, perhaps, they realised but could not express it. This is very evident when you read, say, the *Upanishads*. The writers knew and felt that there was something in matter that was not matter, but they could only express it in terms of matter. Take this saying:—

‘Bring me yonder a fig.’

‘Lo, my lord.’

‘Break it.’

‘It is broken, my lord.’

‘What seest thou in it?’

‘Lo, little seeds, as one may say, my lord.’

‘Now break one of them.’

‘It is broken, my lord.’

‘What seest thou in it?’

‘Naught whatsoever, my lord.’

Then he said: ‘Of that thinness which thou beholdest not, beloved, ariseth this fig tree which is so great. Have faith, beloved; in this thinness hath this all its essence. It is the Tree, it is the leaf. Thou art it.’

The old poet is trying to say that the fig tree ariseth from life which is not a substance, which cannot be seen or touched, or apprehended. The fig tree is a manifestation of an invisible force, which is in all things; which is all things including man. The substance is but the envelope. It is so with much of the writing.

It seems obscure, simply because knowledge had supplied no more applicable symbols. They knew that life, soul, and spirit were not substances, but they had none but words signifying substance. The thought below their writing becomes quite clear and simple when this is understood.

But now science has given better methods. It is true we know no more of life than was then known, no more of man's soul. But we know a little of energy apart from matter.

When the old writers were trying to say that man's soul was not within him, but came from without, they had to tangle themselves in words. They had no simile to show what they wanted to say. Now we can refer to the electric lamp: the light is there, but is not a product of the lamp. It comes from afar. It is not a separate thing, but part of an universal force manifested in a separate entity. And so with our ideals which we think so fixed. The thought was always quite a simple one, but the explanation was impossible till science showed the way. Therefore is science part of religion; science is part of knowledge and religion is knowledge.

To science men must look for further help. Electricity is not life, nor is life consciousness, and Will again is different. We have a very long way yet to go till we can get a simile that will actually fit life, and farther yet before it will fit the soul. But we progress. We can in some way now understand how an energy can exist apart from its manifestation, or rather not how it can, but that it does. We do not know what electricity is, but we know something of how it acts. So we can go on, not daunted because knowledge is

infinite, nay, rather pleased that there will be for ever new things for us to learn.

There will be for ever 'beautiful things made new for the sky children.'

\* \* \* \* \*

These were his last thoughts in the monastery. He turned and went away.

## L'ENVOI

HE went on board at noon and the boat put out on to the broad river. They had hardly need to row: the swift current bore them on its bosom, and they sat and watched the banks go by. They drifted hour by hour past tamarind groves and palms and villages whose feet were in the water. The hot hours passed, and slowly the day waned into evening. The sun sank low, his splendour dying. The tired earth drew across her face a veil of langorous light that stretched to all horizons. Deep silence fell, and an immense, overwhelming sadness dimmed with tears. The day was in its agony and all things mourned.

The sun set in a gold and crimson pageant drawn across the west. It throbbed with living light. A glory caught the clouds that lay, bright islets on an emerald sky. The day was ending, its magnificence was thrown upon all things. The far-off mountains robed themselves in funeral purple, and the river burned.

Then the light died, and suddenly all became grey. Earth drew her mists still closer to her. She was wrapped in fear and mystery and grief. Death's shadow came upon her. She said within her heart: —

'My King, my life is gone, he will return no more. The night comes fast. I die, I die. You that have still the light, make use of it, for the day returns no more, and the darkness takes all things. Live while



the day is with you. But my light has gone.' She hid her face in silence of despair.

The last flush lingered for a while and faded. Darkness took all the world, the tense hush became a perfect stillness. A great peace fell from heaven; it seemed the peace of death. Then the fear passed, the silence lifted. The night awoke in all her majesty.

Her diamond eyes were full of pity, yet there was a laugh hid in them as she looked. The earth moved in her sleep. She feared that she was dead, but only slept. In sleep she found oblivion for her troubles, and on her face a smile arose as of one who knows she is not dead, but lives and dreams, and will awake, sometime.

The perfumed breath of night moved in the palms and whispered in her ear: 'There is no death but sleep. Where is the fear? This is but sleep and rest; art thou not tired? Look up into my stars, my eyes.

'There is no death.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Behind the eastern hills a radiance shone; their outlines stood in darkness on a silver heaven. The stars grew wan. The silver turned to gold, and all the east throbbed with the ecstasy of dawn. The pink that edged the mountain crests burned into fire. The whole heaven flushed with glory that the day was come again; the glory grew.

The long gold fingers of the dawn reached down, and down. They crowned each spire and hill with living flame; and fell still lower. They caught the sheeted mists that lay upon earth's face and with a

touch dissolved them. The earth still slept. Quick from the glowing thresholds of the east the sun leapt down and kissed her.

She moved, and with a laugh held up her arms. A rapture ran across the meadows and the river; there was a magic in the air, the land, a ripple on the water.

And the strong sun cried:—

‘Awake, for I am come again. Life never dies, and after every night there is the dawn!’

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*Author of "The Inward Light"*

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